

# district conference

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# 1 Planning Your Conference

The *District Conference Manual* is designed to help district conference committees plan an event that meets the guidelines established by the Rotary International Board of Directors and the RI Constitution and Bylaws. The guidelines presented in this manual should be adapted to suit the needs, traditions, and customs of your district.

Use [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) as your main resource when planning your district conference. Here you can access current information on all aspects of Rotary, including program details, news, and announcements, and you can shop and search for resources, log into [Member Access](#), and contact staff at RI World Headquarters.

## Purpose

The purpose of the district conference is to provide opportunities for networking, inspirational addresses, and discussions of Rotary-related matters. The event should recognize the service programs, projects, and public relations achievements in the district in order to inspire Rotarians to become more involved in service. The conference should also give Rotarians and clubs a vision of Rotary beyond the club level and provide a memorable fellowship experience. Many Rotarians have said that they were never truly enthusiastic about Rotary until they saw an inspirational presentation at a district conference.

## Guidelines

At a minimum, your district conference program/itinerary should address the following:

- Schedule the RI president's representative's two conference addresses and the brief remarks at the end of the conference.
- Discuss and adopt the audited financial statement from the previous Rotary year.
- Approve the district levy, if it was not approved at the district assembly or presidents-elect training seminar.
- Elect the district's representative to the Council on Legislation, during the Rotary year two years before the Council meets, if the district chooses not to use the nominating committee procedure.
- Elect the member of the nominating committee for the RI Board of Directors, as appropriate for your zone.



These additional guidelines can help you ensure your conference is successful:

- Schedule the conference for two to three days to include plenary sessions and group discussion on Rotary and Rotary Foundation topics.
- Avoid scheduling conflicts with the district assembly, the International Assembly, Rotary institute, RI Convention, and public holidays.
- Hold your conference with another district.
- Plan a program that will be interesting to district Rotarians.
- Involve the RI president's representative in group discussions and other sessions.
- Schedule spouse activities and other events at times that don't conflict with plenary sessions.
- Recognize and welcome new Rotarians, first-time conference attendees, club presidents, and incoming club officers.
- Include those who have participated in Rotary and Rotary Foundation activities.
- Consider district resolutions.
- Promote club and district projects.
- Provide a new member orientation event.
- Offer a district leadership seminar immediately before or after the conference for interested Rotarians who have served as club president or held a club leadership role for at least three years.
- Keep costs low.
- Publicize next year's conference, and encourage preregistration.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Organizing a district conference requires the efforts of many Rotarians throughout the district, who must work together to implement the governor's vision for the event.

### District Governor

The district governor presides over the conference. By ensuring that the event highlights the many service opportunities available through Rotary and the Foundation, the governor helps motivate individual Rotarians to become involved in Rotary beyond the club level. Before the conference, the governor should take every opportunity to promote the conference among district Rotarians. Some of these responsibilities may take place before the start of your year.

District governor responsibilities:

- Appoint the chair and members of the district conference committee while serving as governor-elect.
- Visit other district conferences as governor-elect to get ideas.
- Appoint a conference secretary in consultation with the host club's president.
- Include the governor-nominee on the district conference committee, and introduce him or her at the event.
- Include the governor-elect on the program.
- Oversee the planning, organization, and implementation of the conference.



- Work with the district conference committee to develop a comprehensive and well-balanced program.
- Promote the district conference.
- Make sure the RI president's representative and the representative's spouse receive the hospitality and courtesy afforded to the RI president, including the appointment of an aide.
- Invite governors-elect from other districts to participate in the district conference as they plan for their own conferences.
- Ensure representation from every club in the district, including new clubs, by involving each one in the conference program and activities.
- Encourage community awareness of the conference by having the district public relations committee work with local media before, during, and after the event.
- Invite community representatives to participate in the program as appropriate.
- Address the conference with an inspirational speech.
- Summarize the actions taken at the district conference, and include the summary in the governor's communication to each club in the district.
- Submit the confidential report on the president's representative, sent by the RI president's office, to the RI president.

## District Conference Committee

Under the direction of the governor, the district conference committee plans and promotes the conference, making the arrangements necessary to ensure maximum attendance.

Committee chair responsibilities:

- Appoint district conference subcommittees, and delegate responsibilities as appropriate.
- Meet with the RI president's representative at the end of the conference to discuss the event's effectiveness and recommendations for the following year.

Committee responsibilities:

- Recommend the district conference venue, and manage all related logistics.
- Coordinate conference finances to ensure maximum attendance.
- Encourage conference attendance, particularly among new Rotarians and new clubs, and strive for representation from every club in the district.
- Promote the conference among external audiences such as the media, community leaders, and Rotary program beneficiaries.
- Work with the district trainer to arrange a district leadership seminar to be held before or after the conference.

## RI President's Representative

A representative of the RI president is assigned to attend each district conference to meet with Rotarians and their spouses and provide information on the president, the emphases for the year, and any new RI issues. After the president assigns the representative to a particular district, the governor will receive information about the representative's participation in the conference program, including expenses, aides, and protocol.



The district conference committee should try to arrange visits to several clubs in the district, either immediately before or after the event. If the representative does not speak the language of local Rotarians, the committee should identify a Rotarian who can serve as an interpreter and host throughout the conference and for club visits. The committee may also wish to send the representative information about the district and the amount of time allotted for addresses to the conference. The representative's spouse should be invited to all conference activities, including spouse meetings, social gatherings, and plenary sessions.

Travel expenses for representatives and their spouses are paid by RI. The district conference budget is expected to cover on-site transportation, hotel, and other conference-related costs.

## Aide to the RI President's Representative

An aide should be appointed to the RI president's representative and other RI officers attending the conference. This Rotarian ensures that the representative and his or her spouse have the information and assistance necessary to carry out their duties and participate fully in the conference. For additional details about this role, refer to the information about the president's representative provided by RI to the district governor.

## Host Club

In some cases, the district conference committee may share responsibilities with a host club. According to your district's customs, decide on a system for assigning responsibilities that works best for both the committee and the host club.

## Governor-elect

The governor-elect should be given specific responsibilities to help prepare for convening the conference the following year. The governor-elect should submit the dates and location of the district conference for their year by 1 February through [Member Access](https://www.rotary.org) on [www.rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org).

## Governor-nominee

The governor-nominee may serve on the district conference committee in preparation for his or her term.

## Conference Secretary

The conference secretary assists the district governor in planning and recording the proceedings.

## Assistant Governors and District Committees

All members of the district leadership team should promote and attend the conference as part of their responsibility to support effective Rotary clubs. Their attendance allows the district governor to recognize their efforts and encourages others to serve beyond the club level.

The team should also help encourage attendance at the district leadership seminar, held in conjunction with the conference.



## District Trainer

The district trainer works with the district conference committee and the governor to coordinate the district leadership seminar and any other training offered during the conference.

## Participants

All Rotarians in the district are encouraged to attend the district conference. It is the duty of the club president to ensure that the club is properly represented. All club presidents and presidents-elect should attend.

## Family of Rotary

Family members should be invited to accompany participants and attend plenary sessions, if appropriate for your part of the world. Be sure to include functions in the program specifically for Rotarians' families, including entertainment, tours, and cultural exhibits. Recognizing spouses' and other family members' contributions to Rotary at the district conference will encourage their continued support.

## Partners in Service

Governors are encouraged to invite Rotaractors, Interactors, Rotary Youth Exchange students, Rotary Foundation alumni, and other Rotary program participants to the district conference. These partners in service can speak about their experiences and encourage clubs to continue their support of these programs. Hearing how individuals personally benefited from an RI program encourages program participation and adds to the success of the conference. In addition, their presence better represents the diversity valued by Rotary, and creates awareness among all participants of the scope of Rotary's impact. Involving Rotary's partners in service in the conference may also encourage them to join their local Rotary club.

## Protocol

Use the protocol list for introducing and seating current, incoming, and past RI and Foundation officers and their spouses at formal functions. (Officers should be addressed according to protocol only once, however.) A current position takes precedence over a past position, and a past position takes precedence over a future position. Rotarians who have served or are serving in more than one official capacity are ranked by the highest position held. Spouses are afforded the same rank as the Rotarians they accompany. As a courtesy to guests, Rotarians visiting from a foreign country may be placed before local Rotarians of the same rank, and high-ranking non-Rotarians may be given precedence in ranking according to local custom. The RI president's representative should be afforded the rank normally given to the RI president.



## Order of Protocol

President (or president's representative)	Directors-elect	District governors	Club vice presidents
President-elect	Incoming trustees	District governors-elect	Club secretaries
President-nominee	Directors-nominee	District governors-nominee	Club treasurers
Vice president	Past directors (by seniority)	Past district governors (by seniority)	Club sergeants-at-arms
Treasurer	Past trustees (by seniority)	Regional- and zone-level committee members	Other club board members
RI Board Executive Committee chair	Past general secretaries (by seniority)	Assistant governors	Club committee chairs
Other directors	President, immediate past president, vice president, and honorary treasurer of RIBI; Rotary coordinators; Rotary public image coordinators; and regional Rotary Foundation coordinators	District secretaries/treasurers	Past assistant governors
Past presidents (by seniority)		District committee members	Rotarians
Trustee chair		Club presidents	Rotary Foundation alumni
Trustee chair-elect		Club presidents-elect	Rotarians' families
Trustee vice chair			
Other trustees			
General secretary			

## Logistics

Conference logistics should be coordinated well in advance to ensure a well-organized and enjoyable event.

### General Planning

Carrying out the following tasks can help you plan an effective event:

- Work with all conference planners, including the district governor, district trainer, and district conference committee members, to develop an action plan and timetable.
- Assign subcommittee members to specific tasks with deadlines, depending on their skills and interests.
- Create a draft of your program that will meet conference objectives and be appropriate for the district.
- Identify speakers, panelists, discussion leaders, sergeants-at-arms, and all other necessary participants. Send formal invitations that clearly describe their responsibilities and ask for their commitment.
- Select a site and hotel that meet conference needs. Obtain written confirmation, such as a contract, that outlines your conference dates and requirements as far in advance of the event as possible.



- Notify all participants of the meeting dates, and mail registration and promotional materials as soon as possible.
- Secure adequate liability and property insurance to protect the district and conference organizers against public liability and property damage claims. Insurance should cover all conference activities, including fellowship events, meetings, and banquets. For more information, consult a local insurance agent or legal counsel.

## Site Selection

Districts are encouraged to hold the conference at a location, either in or outside the district, that encourages maximum participation.

If planning begins as early as the term of the governor-nominee, the governor-nominee and a majority of current club presidents must agree to the site selected. With approval of the RI Board, the district may also select the site of the conference for the year of a governor-nominee's service with a vote of the governor-nominee and the club presidents who will serve that year. (If a club has not selected a president-nominee, the club's current president should vote.) For questions about site selection, ask your **Club and District Support representative**.

## Budget

Keeping participants' conference expenses to a minimum is very important in ensuring high attendance, so be sure to select reasonably priced venues, hotel rooms, and entertainment. Your district must determine whether participants will pay a registration fee that covers event costs or whether the district fund will defray these expenses. Selling advertising space in the program book or obtaining local business sponsorships can help offset the cost to individual Rotarians. When developing the conference budget:

- Determine financial policies, including bookkeeping and requisition methods.
- Review all contracts for payment terms and costs, which will aid in budget forecasting.
- Use registration figures and expenses from past district meetings as a reference.
- Arrange for bank services and a review of final accounts by a qualified accountant.
- Settle all bills and remit the balance, if any, to the person in charge of the conference fund.
- Prepare a complete summary of financial operations for use during next year's conference planning.
- Report on financial status as required.
- Obtain the approval of the governor for any substantial changes to the budget.

## Registration

Registration can be handled many ways, including:

- Offering online registration on the district's website
- Sending a registration packet, including the program and descriptions of spouse and family events, to the home of each Rotarian in the district
- Sending registration materials to club secretaries and asking them to promote the conference at weekly club meetings

Keep in mind that a simple registration process may lead to higher attendance.





## Evaluation

Be sure to have district conference committee members and conference attendees complete evaluations at the end of the event. Share the results with the governor-elect, governor-nominee, and future district conference committee members so that they can use the feedback to improve the meeting in the future.

## Risk Management

Risk management is the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling an event to minimize the adverse effects of accidents. Limit the liability of Rotarians and your district by answering three basic questions when coordinating conference activities:

- What can go wrong?
- If something goes wrong, how will I or the district respond?
- How will any losses be paid for?

If something is likely to go wrong, reduce risk by

- Not holding the activity or event
- Modifying the activity or event to lessen the risk
- Preparing a plan to address any potential problems
- Finding another organization that will agree to participate and share the risk

## Contracts

Though conducting business through handshakes or verbal agreements may be common, RI strongly recommends that your district use written and signed contracts. A contract attempts to clearly define the role and responsibilities of each party and can include provisions to limit risk. The main objective is to document the understanding between two parties regarding expected services, fees, dates of execution, redress for nonperformance, and related topics. All costs should be fully disclosed in the contract and negotiated to suit the conference budget. Many vendor contracts include negotiable clauses that provide for attrition (nonperformance) fees and penalties for cancellation.

As the conference approaches, review all contracts and work with vendors to make any necessary changes, provided they are within the event's budget and have been approved by the conference chair or other designee. This precaution will help avoid unexpected fees for unbudgeted services or goods. After the conference, keep legal documents for several years in case a claim is made.

Districts are urged to obtain the advice of legal and insurance counsel regarding liability protection before the agenda is finalized and contracts are signed. Protection may come through incorporating the district or purchasing liability insurance. See the [Manual of Procedure](#) for additional information.



## Needs Assessment

A needs assessment will provide useful data for designing the conference program. Ask a wide variety of Rotarians to offer suggestions for discussion topics and presentations. Be sure to include Rotarians from clubs that were not represented at recent district meetings or last year's conference.

You can gather information on participants' interests through a variety of methods, but two of the most popular are focus groups and phone interviews. Asking just a few simple questions — What would you like more information on? What would you like to do at our conference? — can give you ideas. Use the input to create a program that addresses Rotarians' preferences and concerns, conveys information deemed essential by the district leadership team and RI Board, and provides an enjoyable experience for all participants. For more information about conducting a needs assessment, go to [www.rotary.org/trainers](http://www.rotary.org/trainers) and click on planning a training meeting.

## Program

The success of a district conference depends largely on its program. Plenary sessions should include interesting and relevant presentations on Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation as well as club and district activities. Any special topics suggested by the RI Board or any issues within the district should also be covered. The district governor has final approval of the program.

As you plan, remember to offer a balanced mix of topics and presentation formats. Keep these guidelines in mind:

- Include both Rotarian and non-Rotarian speakers. Often, a non-Rotarian speaker can address a Rotary-related topic. For example, you might invite a teacher to discuss literacy.
- Design the conference so that both new and long-term members learn about Rotary.
- Introduce new ideas that will help clubs with carrying out service or recruiting new members.
- Plan sessions that encourage audience participation.
- Offer appropriate cultural activities.
- Use panel or small-group discussions, performances, and audiovisual presentations.
- Foster fellowship in all sessions.

To help ensure an engaging program, consider these suggestions:

- Hold a small-group discussion that addresses a case study drawn from actual situations. Case studies enable participants to apply abstract concepts to real-life situations.
- Have a panel discuss a local project with attendees from different clubs or the community to highlight community service.
- Use a quiz-show format to present Rotary information, with Rotarians from different clubs in the district serving as contestants.



## Program Agenda Topics

The district conference program should recognize the many interests of Rotarians and provide about 70 percent of content related to Rotary. Consider highlighting club and district projects that address the Object of Rotary or by having small-group discussions on applying the Avenues of Service to Rotary activities. You can also incorporate the three priorities of the RI Strategic Plan into your program. Find more information about the RI Strategic Plan at [www.rotary.org/strategicplan](http://www.rotary.org/strategicplan).

### RI Theme

The RI theme that the president has chosen for the year should be the theme of your district conference. The use of other themes is discouraged. District conferences held after the International Assembly may include the themes chosen by both the RI president and the president-elect.

### Addresses by the RI President's Representative

The representative's main address, which focuses on the goals of the RI president, should be in the most prominent position on the program. Before scheduling this address, the governor or a district conference committee member should discuss it with the representative to help the representative make it relevant to district Rotarians. The RI president's representative also delivers a report on Rotary worldwide and offers brief remarks during the closing session.

### Service Projects and Programs

Ask all clubs in the district to provide a display on at least one club project, either in a house of friendship or a separate space. Exhibits may also include districtwide projects. Emphasize significant service and signature projects that address

- Avenues of Service
- Rotary's areas of focus

### RI Programs

Highlight club and district involvement in RI programs by inviting program participants to report on their experiences, display projects, or join panel discussions. RI programs include:

- Interact
- Rotaract
- Rotarian Action Groups
- Rotary Community Corps
- Rotary Fellowships
- Rotary Friendship Exchange
- Rotary Youth Exchange
- Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

Have the district programs committees help choose topics relevant to your district's activities.



## Rotary Foundation Grants and Programs

To help Rotarians understand The Rotary Foundation and motivate them to participate in its programs, invite those involved in PolioPlus, Foundation grants, and Rotary Peace Fellowships.

Consider these suggestions for featuring Foundation program participants and supporters at the conference:

- Provide a PolioPlus update during a plenary session.
- Invite current scholars to speak about their experience or field of study.
- Ask current program participants or alumni to conduct a session.
- Include a session on your district's involvement with Foundation grants.
- Recognize 100% Paul Harris Fellow Clubs during a plenary session.
- Recognize Rotary Foundation Sustaining Members who have supported the Every Rotarian, Every Year effort.

Involve the district Rotary Foundation committee in choosing Foundation speakers.

## Alumni

Many alumni who continue to share Rotary's vision of advancing world understanding and peace have moved into prominent positions in the community. The district conference is a good opportunity for them to share their experiences, motivate Rotarians to continue to support RI and Foundation programs, inspire greater service, and help the district celebrate its achievements. Be sure to invite people who have been involved in Youth Exchange, Group Study Exchange, Interact, Rotaract, Ambassadorial Scholarships, and other programs.

## New Members

Include sessions specifically for new club members. Consider these approaches:

- Conduct a district orientation for new members.
- Plan a new member discussion group.
- Arrange a mentoring program.
- Schedule a social event for new members and their sponsors.

By meeting with Rotarians from other clubs, new members will broaden their views of Rotary and discover different aspects of the organization.

## Public Relations

The conference is a good opportunity to discuss public relations strategies, including:

- Publicizing action-oriented service projects to build support from the community and attract new members
- Creating PR materials such as media kits, ads, and posters that promote core values and emphasize vocational service
- Using new media
- Incorporating public relations best practices used by clubs in the district
- Promoting networking opportunities and signature events



Involve the district public relations committee in developing this session. Consider asking a Rotarian who is a journalist or a public relations or marketing professional to conduct the training.

## Next Year's Conference

Build enthusiasm for next year's conference by promoting it during this year's program. Invite the governor-elect to encourage Rotarians to register early.

## District Leadership Seminar

Work with the district training committee to hold a **district leadership seminar** in conjunction with the conference. Include it in conference promotional materials. The seminar should aim to develop leaders within the district who have the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to serve Rotary beyond the club level. Attendance at the district leadership seminar is voluntary.

## Resources

**District Leadership Seminar Leaders' Guide** (248) — For Rotarians planning and conducting the district leadership seminar in conjunction with the district conference. Includes training sessions on leadership opportunities, effective service projects, district meetings, and other RI Board-recommended topics.

**District Training Manual** (246) — Designed to help the district training committee plan and conduct district training meetings. Includes train-the-trainer session guide and other resources to prepare training leaders. Find more information at [www.rotary.org/trainers](http://www.rotary.org/trainers).

**Manual of Procedure** (035) — Helps clubs and district leaders understand Rotary and the policies and procedures most relevant to them. Issued every three years, after each Council on Legislation. Contains the RI constitutional documents. One free copy automatically sent to each club.

**New Member Orientation: A How-to Guide for Clubs** (414) — Geared toward Rotarians responsible for creating or updating their club's prospective and new member information programs. Includes sample program outlines, worksheets, and resource listings.

**RI Catalog** (019) — List of RI multimedia, publications, and supplies. Updated annually. Order publications online at [shop.rotary.org](http://shop.rotary.org).

**RI Visual Identity Guide** (547) — Standard reference for the design of Rotary-related websites, signage, publications, and other communications materials. Specifies the proper use of the Rotary emblem, and provides guidelines on colors, design, photography, domain names, and project identification.

**Rotary Leader** — Electronic newsletter for Rotary club and district leaders, published bimonthly at RI World Headquarters. One copy is automatically sent to all club presidents and district governors. Others may subscribe at no charge at [www.rotary.org/rotaryleader](http://www.rotary.org/rotaryleader).

**The Rotarian** — Official magazine of Rotary International, published monthly at RI World Headquarters.



# 2 Conducting Conference Business

The district conference is an ideal time to address important district business, including:

- Adopting the annual statement of district finances
- Setting the district levy (if not set at the district assembly or presidents-elect training seminar)
- Voting on conference resolutions
- Selecting a member of the nominating committee for RI director
- Choosing the district's Council on Legislation representative
- Discussing any legislation to be proposed for the next Council
- Selecting the governor-nominee

Many districts also use the conference as an opportunity to discuss district business, such as financial reports from the treasurer, gain support for district activities and challenges, recognize new clubs, present district awards, and obtain club input on the use of the District Designated Fund.

## District Elections

Many districts elect their Council on Legislation representative at the district conference as well as a member of the nominating committee for the RI director from their zone.

### Council on Legislation Representative

If a district chooses not to select its Council on Legislation representative through a nominating committee procedure, it can do so at the district conference. Your district should elect a representative two years before the Council meets. A club can propose one of its own members or a member of any club in the district to serve as representative. If a club proposes a member of another club, in order for the nomination to be accepted, the prospective candidate's club must agree in writing to the nomination. No Rotarian can attend more than three Councils as a voting representative of the Council.

### Member of the Nominating Committee for RI Director

Every four years, the zone committee nominates a member of one of its clubs to serve a two-year term on the RI Board of Directors. The nominating committee for each zone consists of a past district governor from each district in the zone. Any club in the district can nominate one of its own members. At the district conference, your district should select the member of the nominating committee for RI director from all the nominations submitted by clubs in the Rotary year before the nominating committee meets. No Rotarian who has served twice as a member of such a committee shall be eligible for service again. In certain circumstances, a ballot-by-mail can be conducted to select this Rotarian.



# Voting

Every club member present at the conference who is in good standing within a club in the district may vote on most matters. The following situations are exceptions in which only electors, who represent their clubs, may vote:

- Selection of a governor-nominee (electors from a club with more than one vote must cast all their votes for the same candidate)
- Election of a member and alternate member of the nominating committee for RI director
- Composition and duties of the nominating committee for governor
- Election of the district’s representative and alternate representative to the Council on Legislation
- Amount of the district’s per capita levy

Any elector has the right to demand a poll or special vote on any matter presented to the conference. In this event, voting is restricted to electors.

Each club in the district is entitled to at least one elector at the district conference, based on the membership of the club as recorded on the most recent semiannual report, a report that includes a membership list and RI dues and fees. Each year, all clubs should select, certify, and send their elector(s) to the conference. Any club with more than 25 members may select one additional elector for each additional 25 members (or major fraction thereof). Any club that has been suspended or terminated is not entitled to any electors. The following chart gives examples of the number of electors a club is entitled to:

Number of members	Number of electors	Number of members	Number of electors
37 or fewer	1	138-162	6
38-62	2	163-187	7
63-87	3	188-212	8
88-112	4	213-237	9
113-137	5	238-262	10

If you have questions, contact your **Club and District Support representative** ([cgs@rotary.org](mailto:cds@rotary.org)) or refer to RI Bylaws 12.030.5.

Each elector must be present at the district conference to vote. A club may designate a proxy, either from its own club or any club in the district, for its absent electors with the governor’s consent. The proxy must be certified by the club’s president and secretary. The proxy may vote both for the non-attending electors represented and as an elector for his or her own club.



## Sample Credentials Certificate

Complete two copies of this certificate. Retain one copy for the club's files, and give the other to the electors to present to the credentials subcommittee at the district conference.

From the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To the Credentials Subcommittee of \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Conference of District \_\_\_\_\_

In accordance with the Bylaws of Rotary International, this club has selected the following electors: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This club's total membership (exclusive of honorary members) as reported on its most recent semiannual report: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

President's Signature

Secretary's Signature



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# Actions of a District Conference

Actions offered at district conferences fall into three categories: district resolutions, petitions to the RI Board of Directors, and proposed legislation.

A **district resolution** expresses the sentiment of the conference attendees on a purely district matter, provided that such action is in agreement with the RI Constitution and Bylaws and the spirit and principles of Rotary. Each district conference should consider and act on all matters submitted to it for consideration by the Board and may adopt resolutions accordingly. The governor is asked to outline and submit resolutions passed at the conference concerning more significant matters. Resolutions should be e-mailed to cds@rotary.org. Courtesy resolutions (“thank you” resolutions) do not need to be submitted to RI.

A **petition to the RI Board of Directors\*** is a request to the Board to act on a specific matter. The RI general secretary submits these petitions to the Board for consideration at its next meeting.

Instead of proposing a resolution to the Council on Legislation, a club may submit a petition to the RI Board. Petitions can be submitted by clubs only as a result of regular business at a club meeting and must be signed by the club president.

**Proposed legislation** seeks the consideration and action of the Council on Legislation and may be either a proposed enactment or a proposed resolution:

- A **proposed enactment** seeks to amend the RI constitutional documents (the RI Constitution, RI Bylaws, or Standard Rotary Club Constitution).
- A **proposed resolution** is an action by the Council that does not seek to amend the RI constitutional documents.

## District Resolution

Whereas (state the facts, arguments, or causes for the resolution)

It is resolved that the Rotarians of District \_\_\_\_\_, assembled in their district conference, extend a vote of thanks to those who have contributed to the success of this conference (or whatever the subject may be).

## Petition to the RI Board of Directors

Whereas (state the facts, arguments, or causes for the resolution)

It is resolved that the Rotarians of District \_\_\_\_\_, assembled in their district conference, recommend that the Board of Directors give (state the matter on which the conference desires the Board to take action).

\*Formerly known as a memorial to the RI Board of Directors.



## Proposed Enactment or Resolution for the Council on Legislation

It is resolved that the Rotarians of District \_\_\_\_\_, assembled in their district conference, hereby offer for transmittal to the Council on Legislation of Rotary International the following proposed enactment/resolution:

### PROPOSED ENACTMENT

To (insert concise statement of the proposal's purpose)

Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

IT IS ENACTED by Rotary International that the (insert name of constitutional document) be and hereby is (are) amended as follows:

(Insert the affected portion of the document with changes marked; new text underlined and deleted text struck through)

### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

To (insert concise statement of the proposal's purpose)

Proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

IT IS RESOLVED by Rotary International that the Board of Directors of Rotary International consider (give the text of the action proposed).

## Process for Submitting Proposed Legislation

Clubs and district conferences may propose legislation to a Council on Legislation. All club-proposed legislation must be submitted to the district conference for endorsement. (However, a ballot-by-mail may be conducted if there is not enough time to consider a proposal at the conference.)

If the governor has ensured that the proposed legislation is appropriate for the Council's consideration and it is proposed or endorsed by the conference (or in a ballot-by-mail):

1. The district governor signs a certificate stating that the district conference has proposed or endorsed the proposed enactment or resolution.
2. The district governor submits the proposed enactment or resolution in writing, along with the certificate and a statement of purpose and effect, to the RI general secretary as soon as possible but preferably within 45 days of the conference. If your district proposes or endorses legislation, RI must receive it no later than 31 December in the Rotary year before the Council meets.
  - For the 2013 Council, 31 December 2011
  - For the 2016 Council, 31 December 2014

All proposed legislation must be accompanied by a statement of purpose and effect (not to exceed 300 words) or it will be considered defective and will not be transmitted to the Council. This statement should identify the issue or problem that the proposed legislation seeks to address and explain how the proposal addresses or resolves the problem or issue.



In the Rotary year that the Council meets, the district governor will be provided with 10 copies of all duly proposed legislation. After a Council, all clubs will receive a Report of Action, which lists all enactments and resolutions adopted by the Council. The governor and clubs should review adopted legislation. Adopted enactments change the Constitution and Bylaws of Rotary International and the Standard Rotary Club Constitution and become effective on 1 July following the Council.

Refer to [www.rotary.org/col](http://www.rotary.org/col) or chapter 13 of the *Manual of Procedure* for more information on proposals to the Council on Legislation.



# 3 Promoting Your Conference

Districts that organize outstanding conferences often begin by asking themselves, what will encourage the Rotarians in my district to attend? To be effective, conference promotion efforts must be multifaceted and carefully planned, building enthusiasm by focusing on the benefits of attendance.

## Rotarians

A good publicity effort directed to Rotarians takes skill and time. To take advantage of the resources and expertise within the district, the district conference committee chair should select someone to serve as liaison to the public relations committee. In some instances, it is possible to appoint a Rotarian with public relations or other promotional experience.

Successful publicity work starts early and builds during the year, with frequent reminders sent to Rotarians in the district. Develop a calendar to help you plan and manage your efforts, which should involve a variety of promotional methods.

Consider the following strategies for building anticipation of the district conference:

- Ask the governor to include details about the conference in regular communications with clubs.
- Develop publicity packets, and distribute one to each club. Include text that can be used by the club bulletin editor as well as conference registration materials, program highlights, posters or fliers, and tips for increasing interest among families and spouses.
- Set up a conference website that provides the latest event information.
- Send brief monthly updates to club bulletin editors.
- Work with the governor to distribute short, timely correspondence about the conference to district Rotarians. Examples include:
  - Letters from the governor, conference chair, or other district committee chairs to club presidents and secretaries
  - Notes to specific Rotarians, such as those in certain classification groups or new members, mentioning activities that might interest them
  - Announcements to club public relations committee chairs that include a checklist of promotional tasks to be completed
  - Invitations to incoming club officers
  - Personalized letters from the governor to new members
  - Letters from the governor's spouse to the spouses of club presidents
  - Promotional postcards that can be read quickly
- Promote the district leadership seminar as an extra incentive for all club officers to attend the conference.



- Offer a prize for the best club project exhibit to encourage greater participation. Possibilities include free attendance at next year's conference or funds to support a project.

## Media

Media coverage not only generates excitement among district Rotarians but also promotes Rotary's good work in your community. While planning the district conference, look for opportunities to publicize the event through local media. Work closely with the district public relations chair to identify newsworthy program features such as well-known speakers, compelling service projects, district-sponsored Youth Exchange students, alumni, and Rotary Foundation program participants.

Before the conference, put together a contact list of journalists who may be interested in Rotary, and get in touch with them early so they can plan to attend. Prepare on-site media materials at least one week in advance, and make them available to journalists who attend the event or expressed an interest in it. For more information on creating these materials, refer to [Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs](#).

## Resources

[Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs](#) (257) — Basic tips and tools for promoting club activities.

[Public Relations Division](#) — Staff members at RI World Headquarters dedicated to assisting clubs, districts, and RI in their public relations efforts.

[Public Relations Fact Sheets](#) (Web only) — Assorted Rotary fact sheets to use for speeches, press releases, brochures, and public relations efforts.

[Rotary PR Tips](#) — A biweekly newsletter that offers innovative ideas for clubs and districts working to promote Rotary in their communities. Subscribe at [www.rotary.org/newsletters](http://www.rotary.org/newsletters).

[Humanity in Motion materials](#) — Rotary's Humanity in Motion public image campaign helps increase awareness of what Rotary does and gives to society. This series offers professionally produced multimedia outreach tools that clubs and districts can customize to reflect local and regional needs. The four-disc sets contain public service announcements for television, radio, print, the Internet, and outdoor media such as billboards.

This is the 2011 edition of the *District Conference Manual* (800-EN). It is intended for use by district conference committees planning district conferences to be held in Rotary years 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15. The information in this publication is based on the Constitution and Bylaws of Rotary International and the Rotary Code of Policies. Changes to these documents by the Council on Legislation or the RI Board of Directors override policy as stated in this manual.

If you have questions or comments about this publication, submit them to:  
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