

# Recent Rotaract policy updates

The 2019 Council on Legislation amended the constitutional documents of Rotary International to include Rotaract clubs as a membership type. After this landmark decision, 2019-20 RI President Mark Daniel Maloney appointed the Elevate Rotaract Task Force, composed of Rotaractors and Rotarians, to recommend updates to policies to better reflect Rotaract's newly elevated status. At every stage of the task force's discussions, the critical goals were to learn what Rotaractors want from their membership and to give them every opportunity to shape these important policy decisions through surveys and focus groups.

Below are the notable changes to Rotaract and frequently asked questions about them to help clarify the details of these changes.

## **Key decisions about Rotaract from the July 2020 Trustees meeting**

In July 2020, the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation made additional decisions related to Rotaract:

- The Trustees will appoint a Rotaractor member of the Rotaract Committee to advise the Trustees on matters related to Rotaract.
- The Trustees will appoint a Trustee liaison to the Rotaract Committee and invite the Rotaract Committee to advise the Trustees directly on matters related to The Rotary Foundation.

## **Key decisions about Rotaract from the June 2020 Trustees meeting**

In June 2020, the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation made the following decisions about Foundation policy regarding Rotaract:

- Beginning 1 July 2022, Rotaract clubs will be allowed to be either international or host sponsors of global grants, if they have previously partnered with a Rotary club on a global grant.
- The Trustees confirmed that no rights or privileges that Rotaractors had as participants of a Foundation program will be revoked.

## **Key decision about Rotaract from the June 2020 Board meeting**

In June 2020, the Board of Directors of Rotary International made an additional decision related to Rotaract:

- The Board appointed a Rotaractor to advise it on Rotaract matters at each Board meeting in 2020-21.

## **Key decisions about Rotaract from the January 2020 Board meeting**

In January 2020, the Board of Directors of Rotary International made additional decisions related to Rotaract, based on a survey of Rotaractors:

- Rotaract clubs will begin paying dues to Rotary International 1 July 2022 . The annual dues will be \$5 per member for university-based clubs and \$8 per member for community-based clubs. The \$50 one-time fee for chartering a new Rotaract club will be eliminated.
- A Rotaract club may, but is not required to, set an age limit, if the club (in accordance with its bylaws) gets the approval of its members and, if applicable, its sponsor club . (This is a clarification of the Board's October 2019 decision about the removal of the upper age limit for Rotaract clubs.)

### **Key decisions about Rotaract from the October 2019 Board meeting**

In October 2019, the Board of Directors of Rotary International made several changes to the policies related to Rotaract, which were recommended by the Elevate Rotaract Task Force. To learn more:

- Review the [details of the policy changes related to Rotaract](#)
- Review the [updated Standard Rotaract Club Constitution](#)
- Review the [updated Recommended Rotaract Club Bylaws](#)

Changes to the Code of Policies — effective 1 July 2020:

- Rotaract clubs will be able to establish a new club with or without a sponsor.
- Rotaract clubs will be able to choose other Rotaract clubs as their sponsors.
- Rotaract clubs will be open to all young adults at least 18 years old.
- Rotaract policies will be moved from chapter V, “Programs,” to a revised chapter II, “Clubs.”
- The Standard Rotaract Club Constitution and the Recommended Rotaract Club Bylaws will be amended to reflect these policy changes.
- Rotary districts are encouraged to include Rotaractors in every district committee.

Other key decisions:

- The RI president, the RI Board of Directors, and The Rotary Foundation Trustees should consider how Rotaractors might advise them on Rotaract matters.
- Rotary International has set goals for Rotaract to:
  - Increase the number of Rotaractors reported to Rotary by 100 percent by 2022
  - Increase the number of reported Rotaractors who join Rotary clubs by 20 percent by 2022
  - Increase the number of reported Rotaractors to 1 million by 2029

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **How were these decisions made?**

For several years, the Board, Trustees, committees, Rotarians, and Rotaractors around the world have been discussing how to elevate Rotaract and recognize Rotaract clubs as Rotary clubs’

partners in service. Rotaractors have offered their ideas to the Board through RI's Rotaract Committee, at the annual Rotaract Preconvention, and through online surveys and focus groups — and it was time to take action.

Overwhelmingly, we heard that Rotaract was more than just a program and Rotaractors wanted more flexibility, more products and services, and more recognition from Rotary for the amazing work they're doing in their clubs, districts, and multidistricts. After the 2019 Council on Legislation voted to officially recognize Rotaract clubs as a membership type, the president appointed the Elevate Rotaract Task Force to discuss how to update Rotaract policies to reflect this new status and create an inclusive, innovative, and flexible membership experience.

### **Why were these decisions made?**

Rotarians and Rotaractors have been discussing the importance of Rotaractors as a part of the Rotary family, as people of action, and as an integral part of our new [Action Plan](#). These important decisions reflect the current trends among Rotaract clubs, elevate Rotaract as a membership type alongside Rotary clubs (unique in its identity, club culture, and member benefits), and encourage greater flexibility, innovation, and diversity within Rotaract.

### **When do these changes take effect?**

The changes to the Rotary Code of Policies related to sponsorship and age limits for Rotaract clubs took effect 1 July 2020. However, Rotaract clubs won't be required to pay dues to Rotary International or be able to participate as sponsors of global grants until 1 July 2022. This gives you time to review and discuss these changes with your club and district. Of course, we know that changes take time to implement, and we encourage clubs and districts to develop plans to update their bylaws and incorporate these changes over time.

### **Where can we find the policies about Rotaract?**

You can find the policies in chapter II, "Clubs," of the Rotary Code of Policies. See Article 12 titled "Rotaract Clubs."

### **When do we have to update our Rotaract club's constitution and bylaws?**

The Standard Rotaract Club Constitution has been updated to reflect the changes related to club sponsorship and age limits for Rotaract clubs, and only the RI Board can amend it. The [Standard Rotaract Club Constitution](#) automatically applies to all active Rotaract clubs. The [Recommended Rotaract Club Bylaws](#) have also been updated, and clubs are encouraged to customize them to meet their needs.

### **Why did The Rotary Foundation decide to allow Rotaract clubs to be the sponsors of global grants?**

The Trustees recognized that many Rotaract clubs are already doing innovative, sustainable service projects that are aligned with Rotary's areas of focus on scale similar to that of global grant projects, without any funding assistance from The Rotary Foundation. The Trustees believe that allowing Rotaract clubs to sponsor global grants will give them the opportunity to do even more good in the world. Participating in Foundation programs will also encourage Rotaract clubs to fundraise for the World Fund, which will result in even more resources for their clubs and others around the world.

### **What should district leaders do to prepare for Rotaract clubs' participation in global grants starting 1 July 2022?**

District leaders should begin deciding now how to [qualify](#) Rotaract clubs to participate in global grants. They might involve Rotaract clubs in training seminars, appoint Rotaract club leaders to support fundraising and grant activity for example. District leaders should also consider whether any changes are needed in how they distribute DDF for global grants to help facilitate Rotaract involvement.

### **What should Rotaract clubs do to prepare to participate in global grants starting 1 July 2022?**

To be eligible to be a host or international sponsor of a global grant, a Rotaract club must complete the following prerequisites: learn about [global grants](#) in its district, partner with a Rotary club or district on a global grant, and complete the requirements to become [qualified](#) to participate in global grants. It's important that Rotaract club leaders begin communicating now with their district Rotary Foundation chair and other district leaders, because qualification requirements vary by district.

### **What does it mean that no rights or privileges that Rotaractors had as participants of a Foundation program will be revoked?**

The Trustees felt strongly that changes to redefine Rotaract clubs as a membership type rather than a program should not eliminate any rights or privileges of Rotaract clubs or members. Rotaractors will remain eligible to receive global grant scholarships and Rotary Peace Fellowships. Note that a Rotaractor who is involved in designing a grant may not also be the primary beneficiary of that grant.

### **Why was the upper age limit for Rotaract membership removed?**

Rotaract clubs are still intended for younger professionals. Removing the upper age limit of Rotaract membership allows people to choose the club experience they prefer, regardless of their age.

Under the current policy, Rotaractors are often required to leave Rotaract before they're invited to join a Rotary club or before they feel ready to join one. So, instead, they leave the family of Rotary.

Restricting Rotaract membership to people age 30 or under is perceived differently in different regions. In some places, members are likely to feel that the age limit should be raised. In others, they want it lowered. After careful consideration, the Elevate Rotaract Task Force and the Board decided that it was important to give Rotaractors the flexibility to decide for themselves when they're ready to leave Rotaract. The majority of Rotaractors we surveyed believed that removing the age limit would either improve or not change their club experience, and they said they would still pursue joining a Rotary club in the future.

### **Can our Rotaract club have an upper age limit?**

Yes. The Board believes Rotaract clubs should be able to offer the experience that their members want. If an upper age limit helps you build a successful club, your club has the freedom to set that limit in your club bylaws, but it must be agreed to by club members and your club sponsor (if you have one).

### **Can we have an upper age limit for our district Rotaract representative?**

How district Rotaract representatives are elected is determined by the district Rotaract committee, and approved by the district governor before elections. The Rotary Code of Policies requires only that the candidate has served as a Rotaract club president or as a member of the district Rotaract committee for one full term before taking office. The clubs in your district can decide together to set an age limit for your district Rotaract representative in your eligibility requirements. Even if it doesn't set such a limit, your district should encourage younger members to serve in this important leadership role and remind clubs to vote for qualified younger candidates — this gives young professionals an opportunity to grow and lead through Rotaract.

### **Will Rotaractors still be encouraged to become Rotarians?**

Yes, of course! Rotaractors will still be encouraged to join Rotary clubs that offer the club experience they want at any time. Rotary clubs should continue to partner regularly with Rotaractors at meetings and events and on service projects. Inviting a Rotaractor to join the Rotary club will be a natural step when the time is right. Remember that Rotaractors can join a Rotary club while they are still active members of Rotaract clubs, or they can start their own Rotary clubs.

### **Will Rotary clubs still be able to sponsor Rotaract clubs?**

Yes, Rotaract clubs can be sponsored by a Rotary club or clubs or another Rotaract club, or they can organize themselves without a sponsor. This will give clubs greater flexibility to choose the sponsor relationship that best meets their needs and allows for collaboration.

### **Will Rotaract clubs be able to sponsor other Rotaract clubs?**

Yes, a Rotaract club can sponsor another Rotaract club. This gives clubs more flexibility to find the best sponsor relationship to support their needs. Community-based Rotaract clubs will be encouraged to sponsor university-based Rotaract clubs.

### **How will these changes affect my Rotaract club experience?**

These changes might not affect your Rotaract club experience. Rotaract clubs will still be encouraged to partner with Rotary clubs, plan innovative and sustainable local and international service projects, and offer leadership and professional development opportunities for their young professional members. Rotaract clubs will have more flexibility to design a member experience that meets their needs, engage a wider network of young professionals, and develop relationships with clubs that join together more diverse perspectives, professions, and talents.

### **How will these changes affect my Rotary club experience?**

These changes might not affect your Rotary club experience. Rotary clubs will still be encouraged to sponsor and partner with Rotaract clubs, plan service projects with them, and support Rotaractors in honing their leadership and professional skills through collaboration and mentorship. Rotary clubs should still work side by side with Rotaractors in their communities, encourage the development of new Rotaract clubs, and talk to Rotaractors about joining a Rotary club when the time is right.

### **What will Rotaractors receive in exchange for paying dues?**

The Board believes it's important that RI deliver value to Rotaractors even before Rotaract clubs are required to pay dues. Before 1 July 2022, Rotaractors will have access to new leadership development resources from Toastmasters International, updated online goal-setting tools, and improved online club administration tools. Dues collected from Rotaract clubs will support the new and existing products and services and help us to deliver even greater value to our Rotaract members in the future.

### **How were the dues amounts determined?**

In October 2019, all Rotaractors were sent a survey that asked for their opinions about Rotaract dues amounts and calculation methods. More than 9,000 Rotaractors from around the world responded, providing a sample set of data that was far larger than what was needed in order to represent the Rotary world accurately. The Board based both the amount of dues and the method of calculation on Rotaractors' responses to the survey. [Review the survey's findings in detail.](#)

### **Why won't clubs start paying dues until July 2022?**

The Board felt strongly that Rotaract clubs should start receiving additional benefits before they begin paying dues to RI. Over the coming years, Rotaract clubs will have access to additional tools

and resources at no extra cost. Clubs will begin paying dues 1 July 2022 to sustain these new offerings and allow us to deliver greater value to our Rotaract members in the future.

### **What if our club can't afford to pay dues to Rotary International?**

Although we believe that what Rotaractors will receive in exchange for dues to RI will be worth the cost, we understand that some clubs may struggle to pay any amount in addition to their club and district dues. Over the coming years, we'll help Rotaract clubs plan for this new cost. Strategies clubs might consider include establishing an annual membership fundraiser, asking local businesses or corporate sponsors for contributions, or working with sponsor clubs to offset the cost of dues. Clubs should also make sure that all of their club officers and members are reported to Rotary so that they can receive regular updates and tips as they plan for these changes.

### **Why are there membership goals for Rotaract now?**

Just as clubs set goals to ensure that they continue to grow and thrive, setting membership goals for Rotaract as a whole is vital to ensure its success in the future. It's more important than ever to understand the global impact of Rotaract and encourage clubs and districts to set ambitious goals that will help them engage even more young professionals in service and leadership through Rotaract.

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