

“ New programs ”

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Four new pilot programs will allow participating Rotary clubs to experiment with flexible membership requirements and club operations beginning 1 July.

The three-year pilots -- satellite club, associate member, corporate member, and innovative and flexible Rotary club -- were approved by the RI Board at its November meeting.

Each one is designed to improve recruitment, allow for flexibility in club operations and structures, and provide Rotary clubs with an opportunity to explore new and innovative ways to promote member diversity -- all goals of the RI Strategic Plan.

Other potential benefits include improved leadership and engagement among members and increased support of The Rotary Foundation. The pilots will allow RI to collect data and analyse results from the participating clubs to evaluate the effectiveness of each change.

Clubs have until 1 April to submit applications to Rotary International to be considered for a pilot. Information and applications will be sent to each club in early January. Up to 200 clubs will be selected for each pilot. Rotary clubs must have been chartered before 30 June 2009 to be considered.

Satellite Club

The Satellite Club Pilot Program will assess the impact of allowing a Rotary club to conduct multiple club meetings during a week, each taking place at a different location, on a different day, or at a different time.

Rotarians in the satellite club would belong to a host club but would meet at their own time and location and could have their own projects. This structure may be helpful in areas with many rural communities as well as in large metropolitan areas. The pilot could give a small, weak, or struggling club the opportunity to become connected to a larger, active, and vibrant club in a nearby area and receive ongoing support.

Associate Member

The Associate Member Pilot Program gives clubs a tool for teaching prospective members about the club and the expectations of membership before they join. Clubs would determine the length of time a person could remain an associate member before becoming an active member.

The pilot is aimed at potential members who may be uncertain of the commitment involved with membership. It will provide them with an opportunity to get acquainted with a club's members, programs, and projects, thereby increasing retention.

Corporate Member

The Corporate Member Pilot Program will allow a corporation or company in a club's area to become a member of the Rotary club and appoint up to four people to serve as club members. These corporate members will attend club meetings, participate in projects, and vote on club matters, and are eligible to serve as club officers and committee members.

One of the designees must be a member of the corporation's senior executive group, but the others could hold any full-time managerial role.

Only one of the designees would need to attend club meetings at a time, yet each would be considered an official member of the club and would be required to pay RI and annual club dues, as determined by the club.

Innovative and Flexible Rotary Club

Under the Innovative and Flexible Rotary Club Pilot Program, clubs will be allowed to change one element of its format or structure as an experiment. For example, a club might offer family memberships or conduct a blend of online and in-person meetings. The change should not duplicate another pilot, however.

The pilot is focused on encouraging Rotary clubs to be fun, dynamic, diverse, resilient, tolerant, interested in trying new things. member driven. inspirational. and relationship rich.