



## District Event Grants

### Overview

Experience has shown that consistent, moderate membership growth is the leading key indicator of an effective, vibrant Rotary club. Growth requires the attraction of new members at a rate exceeding 15% per year, to offset normal, unavoidable attrition despite effective club strategies to maximize retention of existing members. One of the few intentional strategies that's sure to attract members is a regular membership event, sometimes called a "Rotary Information Hour" or "Discover Rotary". Clubs that conduct successful membership events regularly, such as quarterly or monthly, have a consistent flow of new members joining their clubs.

### Challenges

There are two primary impediments to motivating clubs to do a regularly-scheduled membership event. The first is that it takes both planning and effort on the part of club leadership - a commitment of time and effort that many clubs aren't willing to make, despite the availability of a step-by-step [Recipe for a Successful Rotary Membership Event](#).

The second impediment is a club's concern about cost, usually limited to refreshments for a 1-hour meeting. "It's not in the budget" is a show-stopper for many initiatives in Rotary clubs, however small the cost might be.

We really can't overcome a lack of commitment by club leadership, but we can take the money concern off the table by offering the clubs a grant to defray the moderate cost of executing a successful membership event. An allowance of \$15 to \$20 per prospective member at a membership event would cover the majority, if not all actual costs to a club, thereby removing cost as an impediment or excuse.

### Solution

A District Membership Grant could be offered with a few boundaries and conditions:

1. Grant Application Process (online form) and Deadline -- Clubs are required to provide a plan for their event consistent with the "Recipe" of known best practices, along with a target date far enough in the future to allow members time to line up prospects. A deadline for Grant Applications prompts timely response by the clubs. Sample Grant Application form at: <https://rotary7750.org/2018-membership-event-grant-application/>
2. Grants would provide \$15 to \$20 per **prospective member** attending (not including club members), requiring identification of those actually attending and entry of those as "Potential Members" in the club's DACdb member database for follow-up and tracking purposes. A cap of \$300 or \$400 could be applied, although a preferred size of such an event is perhaps 10 to 12 prospects.
3. Following the event, the club applies (online form) for its grant reimbursement, reporting on the outcome and how many actual prospects attended.



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4. A District Membership Chair or designee is needed to receive grant applications, coach and prompt clubs whose applications fall short of the requirements before approval, and also administer payments to those clubs qualifying

Costs of such a program are minimal. First, a minority of clubs (rarely as many as 25%) will actually come through with applications and subsequently execute an event. For those clubs that do, attendance of 10 prospects at \$15 each is only \$150 times perhaps 12 clubs for a total program expense of \$1,800, surely an amount a District budget could cover out of other Committee budget underruns or available reserve funds.

District 7750 has run multiple rounds of District Event Grants, thereby creating the opportunity to teach and coach clubs in how to execute successful membership events at a minimal expense, compared with the positive outcomes delivered. Effective "closing" rates of 30% to 50% are not uncommon, meaning a small event with only 6 prospects could be expected to deliver 2 or 3 new member proposals.

Thanks,

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