



### How to create a youth advisory council for your district or zone

1. **Understand the strategic and advisory focus.** A youth advisory council, comprised of Rotary youth program participants, should provide thoughtful feedback and recommendations to improve the quality of programs. It could imagine new district and zone structures and enhance program delivery and operations. An advisory council is not a district committee that implements programs for young leaders. It should be seen as an advising body to your district youth programs committees and it should work to bring all youth programs closer together.
2. **Determine your why.** Consider the purpose of creating a youth advisory council for your district or zone. Do you hope to attract more youth participants, keep youth participants engaged longer in Rotary, or improve the program experiences of your participants? Define what you hope to achieve with the council. Make your goals clear when promoting the opportunity to youth applicants.
3. **Learn the concepts.** For a youth advisory council to be truly led by youth and for youth it is important for adults to understand relevant youth development concepts. An ideal youth advisory council will protect youth, advance youth voice, and build positive youth-adult partnerships.
  - a. **Youth Voice:** includes the ideas, thoughts, and actions of young people. It's a recognition that young people have a key role in the decision-making process in the things that affect and shape their lives.
  - b. **Youth-Adult Partnerships:** require active listening and an awareness that adults and youth have something to contribute and to learn from each other. This means being flexible and honest with each other and open youth and adult cultural differences.
  - c. **Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth:** Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotary members, their partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Throughout the application process and council experience you must receive parent/guardian consent for minors to participate.

Once you have the foundation for creating a youth-led advisory council, you can build the structure and implement it!

4. **Decide on meeting format.** Determine meeting frequency, duration, and location to give applicants clear expectation of time and framework. For example, Rotary's Youth Advisory Council meets virtually on a quarterly basis with some assignments via correspondence.
5. **Create an application process.** Develop application process that is open to all (13+) youth program participants and alumni in your district. The RI Youth Advisory Council's application seeks out youth who embrace diversity and are innovative problem solvers. The application includes a few brief short answer questions and short video submission.
6. **Orient your council members.** Once you have selected the council members, take time to orient them to responsibilities and expectation of the councils, the structure of your district and zone, and

the current landscape of youth programs in your district.

7. **Set goals.** Allow the council to determine what they hope to achieve within their terms of reference and give them time to set personal goals for their time on the council.
8. **Hold meetings.** Suggested ideas from past meetings of the RI Youth Advisory Council include creating participant journey maps, conducting focus groups on training for youth participants, strategic planning for alumni relations, and meeting with other youth council for inspiration and collaboration.
9. **Reflect and succession plan.** Take time to recognize the accomplishments of the group and personal growth of individuals, reflect on how the council can improve for the next year. You may want to allow for the option for some members to have two-year terms create continuity in succession planning from year to year. Host a changeover meeting to create an environment where new members feel comfortable connecting with their predecessors for direction and support.
10. **Celebrate your success!** Highlight the accomplishments of the council and showcase council members at your district and zone events. Let RI know how your district or zone is benefiting from a Youth Advisory Council.