

ROTARY FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE

General Guidelines and Recommendations

The purpose of a Rotary Friendship Exchange is to build friendships and understanding by promoting reciprocal visits (District to District or Club to Club) between Rotarians in different countries. Although the primary purpose of the program is to learn about another culture and build goodwill among Rotarians around the world, the Friendship Exchange often provides Rotarians the opportunity to learn about humanitarian projects and other areas of “need” in the Rotary District they are visiting. This exposure often generates an interest in “being involved” in the project and frequently results in a later commitment to assist. In effect, the Friendship Exchange Program is not only a way to “get better acquainted”, but it often serves as an avenue to “get more involved”.

There are no hard and fast “rules” governing the Friendship Exchange Program. However, based on the experiences of former Friendship Exchange Teams, **the following guidelines and recommendations are suggested:**

DISTRICT TO DISTRICT EXCHANGE

1. The number of Rotary Friendship Exchanges in the District for any given year shall be limited to two. All exchanges first need to be approved by the District Governor. Once approval has been given, the Rotary Friendship Exchange Chairperson will be advised of the request and will make an effort to establish contact with his/her counterpart in the District where the exchange has been requested (Receiving District).
2. The size of the Inbound and Outbound Teams should be **no more than 8** people. (This makes arranging for lodging, activities and transportation much more manageable.)
3. **Ideally, the “Team” should consist of Rotarians from different clubs throughout the District.** (This makes it easier to arrange hosting for the Inbound Team as the Outbound Team Members from different Clubs will already have made a commitment to host as a result of their being part of the Outbound Team.)
4. Once the Outbound Team is “formed”, the Team should get together to select a **“Team Leader”, who will then be responsible for coordinating the actual exchange (both outbound and inbound).** The Team Leader should keep the District RFE Chairperson informed about the progress of plans. For that reason, the District Chairperson should be “copied” on all correspondence between Districts as the Exchange develops.
5. The Team Leader should collect digital photos and short biographies of each team member and then forward this information to the District RFE Chair so that this information can be forwarded to the Receiving District prior to the Team’s arrival. It is also suggested that team members have personalized Rotary business cards printed.
6. The **duration of exchange should be between 14 to 18 days** with approximately 3 days at each location. (It should, however, be noted that many Rotarians will choose to do some additional pre and/or post travel “on their own”)
7. It is recommended that the Outbound Team spend some time together prior to departure. This allows members of the Team to get better acquainted and “bond”. It also provides an opportunity to plan for a Team “Presentation”. (Some Rotary Clubs in the Receiving District will be interested in learning more about our District and our state. It is advised that some sort of small presentation be prepared.)
8. The Outbound Team should purchase small “gifts” to present to the host families and other Rotarians in the Receiving District. In addition, Club banners should be taken to exchange with host Rotary Clubs
9. Travel arrangements should be coordinated through one person to ensure that team members arrive and depart the actual RFE on the same flight or at approximately the same time. There are no Rotary Funds involved in this Program and all expenses are the responsibility of the team members.
10. As a member of an Outbound Team, it will be the Outbound Team’s responsibility to coordinate the Inbound Team’s visit, including: which cities the Inbound Team will visit, lodging and activities. If necessary, assistance will be provided by the District Chairperson.

CLUB TO CLUB EXCHANGE:

The basic guidelines are the same, though this type of exchange is more “limited”, as the “Inbound” and “Outbound” teams will be hosted by each other and do not involve the rest of the District. This type of exchange is limited only by the commitment of the local Rotary Clubs.

PLEASE NOTE that the above items are RECOMMENDATIONS ONLY.

Anyone wishing to organize a Rotary Friendship Exchange should contact either the District Governor or the District Friendship Exchange Chairperson to receive approval.