



Virtual Club Frequently Asked Questions

Altrusa recognizes that outreach is important to its membership in order to grow and remain relevant in our international environment. Our brand drivers are “Clarity, Flexibility and Inclusion”. With that in mind, our organization is charged with offering multiple options of being an Altrusan. The Virtual Club format appeals to different age groups and lifestyles, because it provides members with more Altrusa membership and participation choices.

What is a Virtual Club?

- Club Bylaws: Article 1. Name, Section 2. Virtual Clubs: A virtual club refers to a group of individuals who work together from different locations and interact using technology or other methods of electronic communication and are committed to the principles and purposes of Altrusa. By its very nature, members of a virtual club communicate through regularly scheduled meetings and may never have a face to face communication.

What is the Purpose of a Virtual Club?

- In order for the Altrusa brand to remain relevant in today’s society, the Virtual Club model is an option to the traditional club model that has been the core and spirit of Altrusa for the past century.
- As the mobility of our membership increases and our membership continues to age, it’s important to offer options that allow opportunities for continued retention and growth.

What are Fundamental Traits of a Virtual Club?

In our current Altrusa environment, most clubs use some form of electronic format to communicate. Email, conference calls, and online discussion groups are examples of ways to connect members in an efficient manner. Virtual Club clubs differ from “traditional” clubs in a few characteristics:

- The area they serve is too large to expect the entire group to meet face-to-face regularly. The area may be a state, a district, a time zone, or the entire world.
- Electronic communications are a key element of the club definition: like traditional clubs, they use email lists and a website, but these are core elements in the Virtual Club. Other virtual resources are used in situations for which a traditional club would “call a meeting”.

Can a Virtual Club Resemble a Traditional Club?

- Hosting club programs on specific topics, perhaps with a “guest speaker” either
 1. in real time via conference call or webinar, or
 2. in discussions that occur over email lists or in discussion groups, in which people participate on their own schedules.

- Distributing a directory of members that allows individuals to connect with other members.
- Connecting small groups for specific short term projects either virtually or face-to-face in those virtual clubs where some members live near each other.
- Providing a vital link between the members and the district and international organization via newsletters and other communications to encourage participation in district and international projects.
- Connecting virtual members to the other traditional clubs in the district served
 1. as some members of traditional clubs join the virtual club as dual members
 2. with gatherings at district and/or international meetings
- Encouraging members to contribute directly to the District and International Foundation fundraising efforts, especially since there are fewer opportunities for fundraising projects.
- Recruiting members at face-to-face events or projects in their community as well as through personal contacts.
- Working as any other club to raise retention rates, both by connecting with individual members and improving the programming and other services provided to them.
- Having a specific Altrusa mission focus.

Who are the Membership Target Groups?

- Current affiliate members who are not members at the local level.
- Members who have moved away from their traditional club and now live in an area without an Altrusa Club.
- Previous members who resigned due to inability to attend face-to-face meetings.
- Individuals interested in Altrusa's mission who are not members of Altrusa.
- Current Altrusa club members who wish dual membership with a Virtual Club.
- Prospects who feel they don't have time and seek an alternative way to provide service.
- Disabled or physically impaired prospects who might not otherwise be able to participate in Altrusa.

How is Recruitment done for Virtual Clubs?

Your elevator speech will need to be fine-tuned for your specific recruiting effort. Below are examples of how other organizations have recruited Virtual Club members.

- Prospects who live in areas where there is no nearby club.
- Prospects who live near clubs, but who find that those clubs are not a good "fit" either because of the time they meet or their program/project priorities. A Virtual Club would allow them to support the Altrusa mission and maintain a loose connection to the nearby club. Be sure the traditional clubs understand that the Virtual Club is an option to offer these prospects. As the new members learn more about Altrusa, they may view the traditional club in a different light.

- Request all District Altrusans to send names of prospective members to the organizing Virtual Club.
- Members of under charter strength traditional clubs. They might band together so they'll have a better chance of finding enough members to form a Virtual Club.
- Dual members who want to supplement their current traditional club membership with a virtual component because, while they support their local club, they have additional Altrusa passions that extend beyond their club's priorities.
- Former district and international leaders who want to maintain connections to the friends they made during that service and continue to share information about Altrusa activities outside the boundaries of their community.

Fee Structure and Representation Summary?

- The same that is required for a traditional club. Members who wish to become a primary member pay local, District, and International dues. When a Virtual Club is chartered within a specific District, members are not required to live within that District to have a primary membership.
- Dual members pay local dues to the Virtual Club and local, District, and International dues to their primary club.
- Only primary members count toward charter strength and allowed delegates
- As with new club building for a traditional club, International shall follow Policy 20 and award to the organizing Virtual Club (or District or individual) a specific amount of money as approved by the International Board of Directors based on pre-established criteria.