



OPEN WORLD PROGRAM

The Open World Program, operated by the Open World Leadership Center (the Center), an independent U.S. federal agency, is a special program available to Rotary clubs in the United States through a grant secured by Rotary International.

The Open World Program was originally established as a Library of Congress–administered pilot project in 1999 to give emerging Russian leaders firsthand exposure to the American system of democracy through visits to local governments and communities in the United States. The congressionally sponsored program brings emerging leaders from Russia, Ukraine, and other Eurasian countries¹ to the United States in order to give them firsthand exposure to the American system of participatory democracy and free enterprise. The principles of accountability, transparency, and citizen involvement in government are among the concepts emphasized by the Open World Program. The program is administered by the Open World Leadership Center (the Center).

Rotary International serves as a local hosting organization, with Rotary clubs serving as local hosts for Open World delegations. The 2010 hosting year marks eleventh anniversary of Rotary's participation in the Open World Program. Rotary clubs have hosted over 15 percent of the total 15,500 Open World participants throughout these years. RI is able to reimburse Rotary clubs for many of their hosting expenses through Open World grants.

Objectives

Open World's goals are to build mutual understanding between the United States and participating countries, to create a network of emerging Eurasian leaders dedicated to effecting positive change in their home countries, and to connect these leaders with their American professional colleagues and hosts who are interested in post-visit cooperation and collaboration that will generate concrete results.

PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

- Type:** Exchange program, funded through Open World grants awarded annually to Rotary International by the Open World Leadership Center.
- Approval:** RI Board of Directors agrees to continue Rotary participation in the Open World Program on an annual basis at the January meeting each year.
- Activities:** Approximately 25 Rotary clubs host Open World delegations of 6 participants for 8 days and nights in their communities each year –
Host Rotary clubs are expected to:
- Provide transportation (to/from the airport) and during the visit.
 - Identify host families for visitors and provide meals for the group.
 - Prepare an 8-day program in accordance with a hosting theme and OW participants' interests.
 - Hire a professional interpreter for all professional part of the program.
 - Submit programming materials (agenda, host family forms, interpreter's resume and final reports).
 - Make a presentation about Rotary and take the team to a Rotary club meeting.
 - Expose the team to local cultural and recreational events i.e., art fairs, concerts, museums, hikes, etc.
- Impact:** Rotary-Open World partnership benefits both organizations – Open World participants learn about Rotary and are hosted by one of the best host organizations—local Rotary clubs. Additionally, the program facilitates Rotary projects through opportunities given to Rotary clubs in Russia and Ukraine to nominate Open World delegate, and develop ongoing relationships with program alumni. Specialized programs provide greater leverage for programming results, with topics such as health fairs, hospice care, national parks services, accountable governance and media teams. More promotion of the program is needed to find host Rotary clubs, especially for the expansion countries: Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

¹ Eurasia here means Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.