



# **How to Start a Virtual Club or E-Club**

*Updated by the NFRW Membership*

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**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF REPUBLICAN WOMEN**

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## Virtual Clubs and E-Clubs



The National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW) is a dynamic and unique organization that encourages its members to develop positive long-lasting relationships with one another; acquire and share information and connections to empower one another, so that together, they can effectively and efficiently advocate for Republican causes, candidates, and policies. Our members come from all over the United States and possess various backgrounds, educational levels, and familiarity with the political process and players. These exceptional women vary in age as well as in their diversity of talents, interests, achievements, and level of community involvement.

One of the reasons the NFRW is so unique is that we are not a *'one size fits all'* organization. Our members have many clubs and options to choose from, so they can identify the one that best fits their interests, needs, and schedule when joining a Federated club. Virtual clubs/E-clubs are a viable option that can help connect and engage members using a flexible non-traditional approach.

### **What is a Virtual Club/E-Club:**

The Virtual/E-club is a club that meets online using technology such as group chats, video conferencing, Facebook or similar social network platforms, etc. The Virtual meeting includes all the same information that would appear on the agenda for a physical club meeting. The only difference is the Virtual club meets online while the physical club meets in person at a venue like a restaurant, office, library, or an in-home setting.

### **How to start a new Virtual/E-club:**

Starting a new virtual /E-club follows the same steps as starting any new Federated Republican Women's club:

- \* Identify your sphere of influence. Would women in your area, county be interested in joining a Virtual club? Contact your State President to obtain advice and encouragement. She and her executive committee and board of directors, especially her Membership Promotion Chairwoman and committee, are there to help you get started and to be successful over time.
- \* Remember at least 10 women are needed to charter a new club with the NFRW. Many smaller clubs find that a group of at least 25 or more allows their club members to fulfill essential leadership roles as officers and committee chairs. Empowering and mentoring members for leadership roles in clubs prepares them to subsequently assume higher-level responsibilities at both the state and national level within our organization. It also is helpful with succession planning and might even encourage some to consider running for elected office outside the club.
- \* All the details and forms needed to start a new Virtual Club and to be chartered by the NFRW can be found in the Guide to Starting a New Club /New Club Handbook.
- \* These tools are all available in the Digital Resource Library at NFRW.org, under 'Membership'.

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- \* The New Club Handbook also includes a sample set of bylaws/standing rules that are a required component of the chartering process for all NFRW clubs. Each club's bylaws/standing rules must be approved initially (as well as periodically when changes are voted upon and approved) by the club members as well as the State and National Federation Bylaws Chair/committee.

### **Who joins Virtual /E-clubs:**

Virtual clubs are perfect for women who have small children at home, homeschool their children, business women who travel, live in rural areas, millennials, those who are homebound or have mobility and/or transportation challenges, or any woman who does not have time to go to physical meetings but would like to have the information and remain involved and engaged. Knowledge is Power -- and the NFRW is all about empowering women through political education and activity!

### **How is a Virtual /E-Club structured:**

There are so many possibilities when creating a new Virtual Club. Remember, just like a physical club, it's essential to identify member's talents, passions, and skills. All the things done at a physical meeting are included at online meetings, such as an Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance (see a moving rendition by Red Skelton on the website), business items with space for members to ask questions or vote, presentation from speakers in video or print and more. Some virtual clubs have their members pay their dues or any fees online using merchant services like 'Square' or PayPal'.

- \* Clubs can hold meetings using Skype to bring members together. However, most women join a Virtual Club because they want to have flexibility and go to the computer when they have time. Week-long meetings or long weekend meetings are sometimes the best way to get the most involvement because of the flexibility.
- \* With week-long or long weekend meetings women can log on at their convenience, participate in the message boards and come back whenever they want to. Outside of the meeting, women can chat or bring up interesting topics, meet for coffee, or volunteer together at a community food pantry or political rally.
- \* Virtual clubs need to update their content on the club website more often than physical club websites. What appeals to women who want to be involved online would be staying connected ONLINE. That means linking to all social media activity and keeping website contact fresh for women so they keep coming back. Think blogs, pictures, comics, webinars, hipster chats and links to prevalent articles.
- \* Conduct online membership drives through Facebook and Twitter. For a low-cost alternative, advertise your club on Facebook and Twitter to recruit new members on a monthly or quarterly basis depending on what the club budget permits. Recruit members at Republican events, fundraisers, and political rallies.
- \* Quarterly Happy Hours can be an incentive and an opportunity to meet members in person. Younger, working women and young mothers tend to be attracted to virtual clubs. A Happy Hour is a great way to conduct a membership drive, and gets members together face to face. This social aspect is appealing to many women online and offline too, so consider periodically partnering with other local physical clubs in the nearby area to share ideas with one another and expand the networking opportunities available to Virtual/E-club members.

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### **What are the benefits of being a member of a Virtual/E-Club:**

- \* Utilize Discussion Boards with information for current legislation, issues, & talking points weekly so members will continue to come back to your website.
- \* Virtual Club members will have access to information that will empower them to share and increase their presence on social media.
- \* Our Virtual club members are our **Online Activists** discussing the issues on social media.
- \* By joining a Virtual club, Republican women with restricted time can become active members, participate in the political process, and continue to make a difference in their community at a time that is flexible for them.

### **Benefits to starting Virtual/E-clubs:**

- \* One of the benefits of starting a Virtual club is that there are so many possibilities to choose from given all the many technology tools available. Every meeting can have a completely different agenda from a guest speaker one month to a webinar learning session the next. Arranging for excellent quality education components in virtual and physical club meetings keeps members coming back for more each month.
- \* The most important benefit to starting a Virtual /E-club is being able to involve and engage women who have restrictive time which does not allow them to attend physical meetings. These younger women, working women, young mothers and more can have the opportunity to become NFRW members at a time that is flexible for them. They are the future of our organization.
- \* Virtual /E-clubs can provide Republican women with restricted time to become members, participate in the political process and continue to make a difference in their community.
- \* Our goal is to have at least one or two Virtual /E-clubs in each state, connecting Republican women, sharing information and ideas across the country, and building an even stronger National Federation of Republican Women.

# Addendum 1



## Michigan Virtual Club FAQs

**What is a Virtual Club?** A Virtual Club is a “Club” that is part of the Federation of Republican Women in a state who assemble, meet, conduct business, train, and present virtually. As with all federated Clubs, the Virtual Club has bylaws, an elected President and Officers, and membership with voting rights. Virtual Clubs use a variety of 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology to connect women across the state who wish to join the army of Republican Women but are unable to participate in traditional Clubs.

**What does a Virtual Club offer?** This virtual membership level creates a statewide Club and provides working and professional women, students, at-home moms, women living in rural areas, and those physically unable to attend traditional Club meetings across the state with voting rights and virtual meetings and engagement.

**How are Virtual Clubs different from Traditional Clubs?** Outside of ‘how’ the women meet or engage, there is no difference between Virtual Clubs and Traditional Clubs. At the state Federation level, there is no difference. Virtual Clubs have specific language in their bylaws that give them the ability to meet and vote electronically. Annual dues are collected. The Virtual Club has monthly or quarterly meetings and events, and annual meetings. Technology allows the use of email, phone, or other applications to engage Republican Women across the state. Based on the technology, speakers and training may be presented via conference call or visually.

**What are the objectives of a Virtual Club?** The Virtual Club increases state Federation membership and is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of Republican women in the cause of good governance; by reaching out to capture and increase NFRW membership for women who have time or travel constraints; giving women a stronger voice through information age technology; and motivating women to become involved in the election process and electing Republican candidates.

**What are the benefits of a Virtual Club?** Virtual Clubs allow Republican Women the opportunity to participate in the state Federation on their terms. Members are connected with a state Republican sisterhood and National Federation of Republican Women resources. Membership drives in the Virtual Club is easier and more assessable. Women living near a Traditional Club have the option of attending or joining as an associate member. Most elected Republican Women will join a Virtual Club. The cost of membership to the Virtual Club is typically lower than a Traditional Club and since meetings are online, there is no travel, food, or speaker costs associated with the Virtual Club membership.

**How does a state start a Virtual Club?** Simple! Find a Club President and Club Officers who are “Techies” able and willing to use modern technology. Members do not have to have technology skills, but leadership should. These 10 women do not have to live in proximity of each other. They should form the new Virtual Club with specific language in the bylaws that allow for virtual meetings, virtual voting, and virtual communication. Once the Club is chartered, statewide membership begins!

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Presented by: RWFm President, Linda Lee Tarver