



**American
Red Cross**

Youth Engagement

RED CROSS CLUBS IN A VIRTUAL SETTING

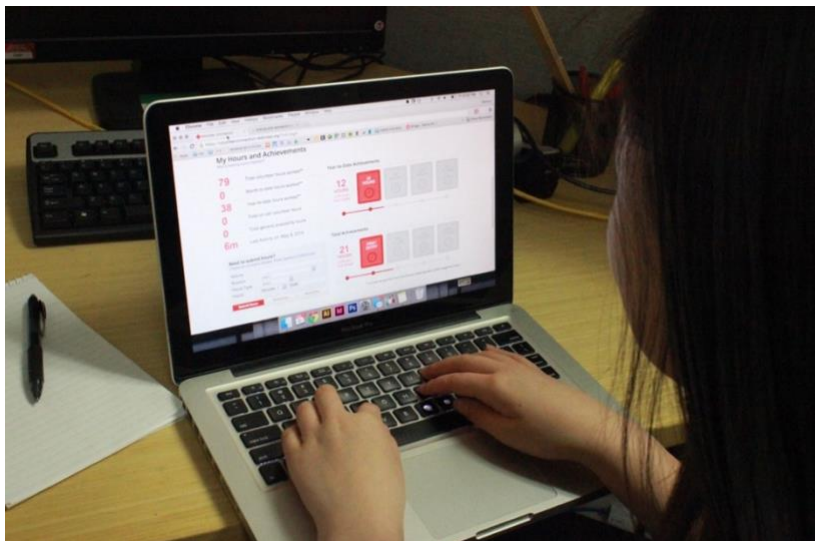


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Overview

Social distancing doesn't mean social disengagement! Your Club remains key to the Red Cross mission. From planning virtual Club projects to partnering with Clubs across the country to host remote events, we're here to help your Club thrive in this new environment. Your Club can continue to mobilize the power of youth and young adults from home by following the steps and best practices of our Red Cross Clubs in this Virtual Setting guide.

Transitioning Your Red Cross Club Online

❑ Step 1. Update member contact information.

As your school transitions to remote learning, reach out to Club members to confirm their contact information and update accordingly. We encourage you to contact Club members regularly to check on their wellbeing and safe keeping.

❑ Step 2. Establish channels of communication.

Maintaining consistent communication with Club members is vital to engagement and retention. Establishing channels of communication not only keeps members informed and engaged, but helps cultivate a sense of community while practicing social distancing. There are several messaging platforms available to help you facilitate communication.

Some popular messenger apps include:

- Facebook Messenger (widely used and easily accessible)
- Slack (helps streamline communication through customized channels)
- Google Hangouts (allows for video and voice calls)
- WhatsApp (easily share files and images)
- Red Cross communications channels (especially the calendar function)
- Red Cross GroupShare on Volunteer Connection (share Red Cross updates)

Creating a monthly communication or sharing a self-care guide are great ways to keep members in the loop and show you care about their wellbeing. Work with your regional communications team to consider your marketing options, including a newsletter. Maintaining virtual office hours for Club leaders also helps facilitate one-on-one engagement with Club members. Check out the National Youth Council's [Office Hours](#) page for ideas on how to structure your own virtual office hours program.

❑ Step 3. Create shared workspaces with online tools.

Shared workspaces provide an online area where Club members can work collaboratively and securely share information. With the right online tools, you can transition current projects virtually where all Club members can continue to contribute.

Some online platforms you can use include:

- Google Drive (features Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides with live editing features)
- Dropbox (file hosting software)
- Microsoft SharePoint (integrates with Microsoft Office)
- Microsoft Teams (combines video meetings, file storage, workplace chat and application integration)

❑ Step 4. Update your Red Cross Club GroupShare.

Your Red Cross Club GroupShare is a useful tool for communicating with your Club members on a day-to-day basis. Encourage Club member participation by keeping content fresh, current and relevant. You can learn more about how to manage your Red Cross Club GroupShare [here](#).

❑ Step 5. Mark all Red Cross relevant dates.

While many in-person events have been postponed or canceled, there are several upcoming dates worth noting. You can also add additional dates that have a special relevance for youth volunteers:

- March is Red Cross Month – month of March
- Global Youth Service Day—usually the 4th weekend in April
- National Volunteer Week—4th week in April
- World Red Cross Red Crescent Day—May 8
- International Youth Day—August 12
- National Preparedness Month – month of September
- Make a Difference Day—4th Saturday in October
- National Youth Involvement Month—month of November

❑ Step 6. Follow us!

Follow our Instagram, [@americanredcrossyouth](#), and regularly check [redcrossyouth.org](#) or a future issue of [YouthWire](#) for the latest updates and ideas for projects! YouthWire is a monthly e-newsletter containing important Red Cross youth and young adult volunteer opportunities, stories, and resources for youth, young adults and youth champions. YouthWire can help you make the most of your Red Cross experience and connect you with other volunteers from across the organization.

❑ Step 7. Share! Share! Share!

We want to hear about your great events and activities! Send stories to youthinvolvement@redcross.org and you might be featured on our Instagram ([@americanredcrossyouth](#)), [redcrossyouth.org](#) or a future issue of [YouthWire](#)!

Holding Club Meetings from Home

There are many types of meetings you may hold as a Red Cross Club, including Executive Board meetings, general Club meetings or committee meetings. These meetings allow

members to come together to discuss ideas, plan events and receive updates. Despite the distance, you can continue to hold regular Club meetings virtually. Popular communication or video conferencing platforms, including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts and WebEx, can help your Club run meetings as normal as possible from home.

It is important that you continue to plan your meetings in advance and distribute meeting invites in a timely manner with login instructions. Designate a contact person for technical questions during your meeting and share their contact information with members. This person can also help monitor the chat functions, where applicable, for any questions or comments for the group. Follow the four phases outlined in the [Club Meetings](#) toolkit to plan and run an effective meeting.

A best practice is to have your Club create an online calendar of future meetings for each semester developed in collaboration with your officers. You should consider sending messages via Volunteer Connection, e-mail, text, school announcements, social media or mobile apps.

Before your meeting, share the meeting agenda online via your shared workspace so that members can follow along. You can record meetings or take notes/minutes and upload them to your shared workspace for members who are unable to attend.

Lastly, get creative! Invite regional Red Cross staff and volunteer to join your meeting virtually and discuss how they are supporting the Red Cross mission during the COVID-19 pandemic. Partner with neighboring Red Cross Clubs to hold joint-meetings and brainstorm projects collectively. You can also utilize screen sharing features to share presentations and stream videos during the meeting. Don't forget to log your hours on Volunteer Connection!

Planning Serving Projects from Home

As a Red Cross Club, there are endless activities and projects you can do remotely. When planning for the pivot to virtual engagement, the first thing to keep in mind is: *How can you best represent and promote the Red Cross mission and fundamental principles through Red Cross Club initiatives?*

In addition to the Red Cross mission-related service projects outlined in the [Red Cross Clubs: Service Project Ideas](#) Toolkit, you can also plan your own service projects. Feel free to be creative with service activities, but don't forget to receive approval from your local Red Cross Region before getting started!

Here are some tips for planning your own projects whether you use activity guides, initiate your own project or get involved with local regional activities.

1. **Map out potential projects that can be done remotely or brainstorm new ones.**
Host a meeting with your Club members and come up with a realistic list of project ideas. You can use the whiteboard feature on videoconferencing platforms to compile ideas. Service projects should fall into one of the Red Cross departments: Be sure to check out if there are virtual opportunities available in communications, marketing, and training services as well
2. **Check out our [Volunteer from Home](#) guide to learn about specific virtual engagement opportunities within each department.** Existing Club-friendly projects that can be done online include:
 1. [Chapter Blog](#)
 2. [Tweets to Thank](#)
 3. [Virtual Disaster Training Options](#)
 4. [IHL Youth Action Campaign](#)
 5. [Missing Maps](#)
 6. [Raid Cross](#)
 7. [Youth Diversity Pledge](#)
3. **Develop a calendar of activities.** Once you have devised a list of projects, create a timeline for each project and develop a Club calendar for the year. The calendar will provide an “at-a-glance” perspective of your workload and your members’ availability and should help you plan your specific projects. You can match your calendar to what your region is focusing on for a given month by working with your Red Cross Contact.
4. **Develop a project plan.** When implementing a new project, it is important to keep in mind a general image of what you want to achieve with this project. Make sure to contact your local Red Cross Region when planning a project to keep them informed about Club activities. They may be able to provide you with resources and additional project support.
5. **Get creative!** Partner with local Red Cross Clubs to plan joint projects or reach out to your Red Cross Region to see how your Club can help support your community’s local response to COVID-19.

To learn more about the elements of a good project and access the project plan template, check out our [Planning Your Own Projects](#) toolkit.

Recruit, Retain, and Recognize Club Members from Home

You can continue to engage both current Club members and prospective Club members through online tools, social media and via word of mouth. Regardless of how experienced your Club is, member recruitment, retention and recognition are always an exciting challenge and an important focus year-round. In this section, we discuss some strategies that will enable you to recruit new members, successfully engage existing ones and recognize those who have made a difference in this current virtual environment.

Recruiting New Club Members Virtually

Just because you're not at school doesn't mean you can't continue to carry the Red Cross message to your peers and recruit new Club members. Consider developing a virtual recruitment plan with your officers and set some specific guidance for recruiting and involving your peers in your virtual and remote Club activities.

Designing Your Virtual Recruitment Strategy

Social media is a powerful tool to recruit members. Be sure to reference these [Social Media Guidelines](#).

Consider creating a shared calendar to schedule social media posts ahead of time. Join ongoing Red Cross social media campaigns using hashtags #VFH (Volunteer from Home), #IHLYouthAction, #stayingsafe, #savinglives, #emergenciesdontstop. You can use [Cutout Clara](#) while volunteering from home or share a [Pathways](#) to illustrate your Red Cross journey and encourage others to join.

Other suggestions

- Host a Virtual Volunteer Fair ([example](#))
- Make announcements advertising your Red Cross Club on your school's website
- Start a Facebook group and invite your friends
- Spread the word through other social networking websites
- E-mail friends about joining your Red Cross Club
- Reach out to your regional communications team for support.

If you are not sure, always ask! Your Regional Volunteer Services team and the Regional Communications Team are here to help you. When using any of these methods of communication, make sure everything is professional and follows [brand standards](#) to ensure that the Red Cross logo is used correctly. Feel free to reach out to your regional Communications team for support. This is important in creating a positive image of your Club.

Retaining Club Members

Retention shows your Club's ability to keep members active and engaged. Most clubs have a fluctuating membership base, even when they meet in person. Whether your Club is just starting out or already has years of experience, all Clubs may face retention issues for a variety of reasons. Below are some ways your Club can promote member retention:

- **Learn Club members' names.** It is important for Club members to feel that they are part of a team. Learn the names of all members and send personal follow-ups to those who miss meetings to let them know they were missed. Ice breakers are a great way to engage with members before the start of a meeting and learn their names.
- **Communication is key.** Keep members up to date with all major developments in the Club. Request feedback and make Club members part of the decision-making process. Learn from past mistakes and improve your interactions with members. If you find some

members have become less active than they previously were, reach out to them personally to find out why and let them know they are missed.

- **Be proficient in managing Club meetings.** Host well-structured, engaging meetings and pay close attention to the general atmosphere. Make sure to use icebreakers, establish a welcoming work environment and manage conflicts in a professional manner.
- **Monitor member satisfaction.** This is a stressful and challenging time for many Club members. It is important to be mindful and considerate of issues Club members may be facing at home.
- **Create leadership and development opportunities.** Often, during stressful times, the Club President generally takes charge of everything. However, when possible, let other officers, committee leads or Club members take on responsibilities as well. This will allow your members to take ownership and more directly feel the impact.
- **Have fun!** The most important thing is to get to know each other and cultivate friendships while being immersed in the mission. Hosting remote movie nights, participating in Red Cross Youth's Instagram [Bingo](#), or starting a virtual mentorship program for new members will keep members engaged and having fun.

Recognizing Club Members

Recognizing the work done by your Club members remotely must be a priority for your leadership team.

Recognizing your peers can be as simple as sending a virtual thank you note, awarding a digital certificate at the end of the year, or creating an e-birthday card. Through recognition, you can show your members that their time and effort is valued.

There are many ways to recognize your members, but at the very least, personally thank them for their contribution (over email or video chat). Praise your peers for their passion for the Red Cross mission and their amazing work!

Some recognition ideas:

- Recognize a "Volunteer of the Month."
- Create an end-of-the-year virtual recognition event for your outstanding members in conjunction with other Red Cross Clubs in neighboring schools.
- Share outstanding member stories with the local Red Cross Region and/or the school newspaper.
- Recognize members on national platforms, such as the [Youth Spotlight](#) program on YouthWire
- Nominate volunteers for Red Cross or other award programs.

You can also work with your local Red Cross Region to see what types of recognition ideas or events they host throughout the year.

Lastly, check out our [Recruit, Retain, Recognize, Club Members](#) toolkit to learn more.

Working With Your Red Cross Region

Your Red Cross Club can play an important role in helping your local Red Cross Region deliver critical services in your community. As your Club is an extension of the local region, connect with your local Red Cross Region to identify the best ways to support mission delivery in your community. Creating a strong partnership and working with your Youth Engagement Lead/Volunteer Services contact adds value and builds capacity for your Club. This section will help you to build a connection with the local Red Cross and make the most of your partnership.

When connecting and working with the local Red Cross Region you will want to take the following steps:

Connect	Inform	Collaborate	Share & Report
Establish a contact with the local region and initiate a regular communication process with your point of contact.	Share relevant information on your club membership, structure and upcoming projects.	Maintain communication and work together to implement relevant projects and initiatives.	Keep your Red Cross Region up-to-date with Club activities and enter them in Volunteer Connection so they can be shared on social media.

☐ Step 1. Find the closest Red Cross Region to you.

- Visit redcross.org and click on “[Find Your Local Red Cross](#)” at the top right side of the screen to get connected.

☐ Step 2. Identify the correct contact person in the local Red Cross Region.

- When you contact your Red Cross Region, ask to speak with the person who supports youth and young adult volunteers. This person is commonly the Volunteer Engagement Specialist or Youth Engagement Lead. If interested in working with Biomedical Services, be sure to ask your region contact to get in touch with the correct biomedical representative.
- If you have an existing working relationship with you Region, please confirm the contact information for your Red Cross Region at the beginning of the new school year.

☐ Step 3. Initiate communication—express your intent to start a Club or continue your Red Cross Club.

- You can either call or email the contact person in the local Region. Your initial communication should include:
 - Short introduction
 - Your role in the Club
 - Your desire to have a meeting with the local Red Cross Region

☐ Step 4. Schedule a meeting with your Red Cross Regional Contact.

- Make sure to provide accurate information on how you can be contacted and follow up promptly.
- Prepare an agenda and have clear items on what needs to be discussed.
- Ensure that your Executive Board will participate in this meeting. It gives you the opportunity to coordinate your upcoming initiatives with the local Region.

□ Step 5. Schedule periodic meetings with your Red Cross Region Contact and Club members.

- Secure a time to meet virtually that works best for your Club members and for your Red Cross Region Contact.
- You can hold the meeting using a videoconferencing platform. If possible, invite the sponsor/advisor to join the meeting.
- Check to see if your Red Cross Region has regularly scheduled calls or meetings for all the Clubs in your area.

□ Step 6. Discuss upcoming projects and ask for guidance and informational resources.

- Identify joint projects and the Club's specific support needs.
- Share your Club's inventory, including your available resources (e.g., school financial support, access to printing, club members with technical skills), and existing needs (e.g., someone with marketing experience, someone to provide guidance on your fundraising, etc.). It is important to establish the availability of your resources and verify what is realistic to expect in terms of concrete support from the local Region.
- Your Club can also offer to support ongoing regional projects remotely such as assisting Volunteer Services with recruitment, calling volunteers who have anniversaries to remind them to take the volunteer satisfaction survey, or supporting fundraising and development tasks.
- Your Club may also inquire about other opportunities like hosting a virtual volunteer open house with lines of service leads, organizing career panels or professional development workshops with regional leadership and board members, and hosting weekly connect calls with regional staff to learn about different aspects of the Red Cross.

□ Step 7. Develop your Club's calendar of activities and share it with the local Red Cross Region.

- Based on the identified needs, together with your Club members you will select a few projects to be implemented by your Club throughout the school year.
- Develop your yearly calendar of activities. The local Region can help you create a calendar that aligns with Red Cross monthly focus areas and existing regional events.
- Post all your upcoming events and activities on your Red Cross Club GroupShare calendar on [Volunteer Connection](#).
- Make sure to share the Club's calendar or GroupShare with your Red Cross Region Contact.
- If you plan to implement a large-scale virtual event and you are relying on the local Region's support, please ensure that you clearly communicate all your support needs well in advance and you follow up on your requests.

❑ Step 8. Inform and coordinate all events implemented by your Club with your Red Cross Region.

- Ensure that you maintain constant communication with your local Red Cross Region.
- When appropriate and possible, attempt to collaborate with other Red Cross Clubs on projects/events.
- Allow appropriate time for planning events and scheduling training classes with your local Region.

❑ Step 9. Don't forget to thank your local Region for their support!

For more information, check out the [Working With Your Red Cross Region](#) toolkit.

Planning for Next Year

It's never too early to start planning for next year! There are several steps your Club leaders can take to initiate virtual planning while being mindful of the evolving situation regarding COVID-19.

A great tool to help you in this planning process is the Red Cross Club calendar. There are a few elements that you need to consider before identifying major events and writing down the dates.

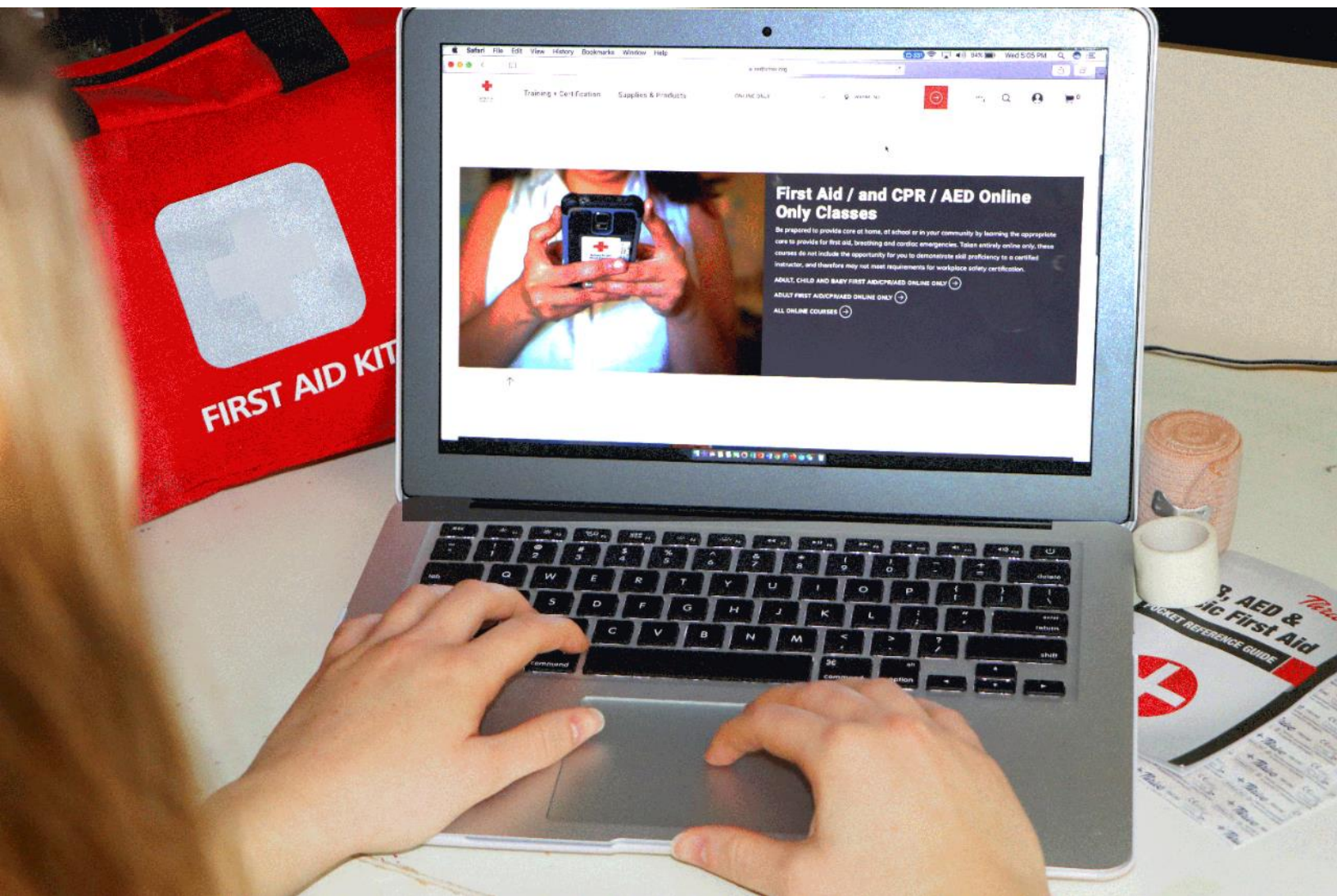
- Research and identify virtual events happening in your school and explore ways for your Club to get involved.
- Identify any remote or virtual events that are taking place in your community and take them into account when planning your activities.
- Come up with several projects you want to implement throughout the school year (both in-person and remote)
 - Remember: It is mandatory that you complete at least three mission-related projects per school year.
- Make a calendar that is easy to customize and update. You can use Volunteer Connection for organizing all your upcoming events.
 - Set up email alerts and reminders for upcoming events.

With regards to leadership transitions and elections, there are several tools you can use to make it a smooth process. Candidates for officer positions can submit short statements/videos for why they are running, and members can cast their votes via email to the Club sponsor.

For more information check out our [Planning Your Red Cross Year](#) toolkit. Members of the National Youth Council are always ready to help Clubs with any questions or with brainstorming virtual projects. Sign up today for [Office Hours](#) with a Council member or email youthinvolvement@redcross.org to get connected.

Thanks so much for helping move the Red Cross mission forward!

We want to hear about your great events and activities! Send stories to youthinvolvement@redcross.org and you might be featured on our Instagram ([@americanredcrossyouth](https://www.instagram.com/americanredcrossyouth)), [redcrossyouth.org](https://www.redcrossyouth.org) or a future issue of [YouthWire](https://www.youthwire.com)!



Contact your local Red Cross Region for more information.

Impact Starts Here