



HOW TO BUILD A **TOASTMASTERS CLUB**

A Step-by-step Guide





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Your step-by-step guide

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

www.toastmasters.org

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WELCOME!

But just what do we mean by “leadership?” It would appear to be the capacity to look ahead, think ahead, plan ahead and then influence other people to go ahead in the plan.

— Ralph C. Smedley, Founder, Toastmasters International

Congratulations on your exciting decision to start a Toastmasters club. Because of dedicated people like you, more than 1,000 new Toastmasters clubs are chartered each year and hundreds of thousands of people worldwide are becoming more successful communicators and leaders. In deciding to start a club, you have taken on an important leadership role. Ralph Smedley believed that people can discover their latent leadership talents by participating in the regular activities of a Toastmasters club.

In your new club, members will learn valuable skills that will benefit their personal and professional lives. You will be encouraged to present impromptu and prepared speeches, learn how to plan and manage meetings, give and receive constructive feedback and participate in a comprehensive, self-paced education program.

The good news is that starting a club is much easier than you may think! Use this guide to get going and follow the steps to build a successful club. You will have plenty of support and resources along the way, many of which can be found right here in this guide.

Good luck with your new club!

Why do you want to start a Toastmasters club?

You may have many reasons for wanting to start a club. For example, if you're interested in forming a corporate club, it might be because you'd like to give yourself and your colleagues the opportunity to build your communication and leadership skills together. If you're interested in forming a community club, it might be because you want to help yourself and others develop self-confidence and leadership potential. One of the most important things to consider before you start your club is the Toastmasters club mission:

"Toastmasters International provides a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth."

The club you form should embody this mission. Starting a Toastmasters club is an important responsibility and undertaking. It's your job to ensure that all members feel supported and that you have the resources to sustain and grow your membership. Providing a quality club experience should be your primary goal. For tips on running a successful club, see page 10.

STEP 1: LEARN HOW TOASTMASTERS WORKS

Check out a few clubs

Each Toastmasters club has its own personality, so it's a good idea to visit more than one to see what kind of club environment you'd like to create. We also encourage you to watch the **Club Experience Video** to see how a typical meeting is run.

While many Toastmasters clubs meet in person, clubs may also meet solely online or have a hybrid format, allowing members to join by video conferencing. With membership exceeding 280,000 in more than 14,700 clubs in 144 countries, Toastmasters makes it easy to find a club near you. An up-to-date listing of Toastmasters clubs can be found at www.toastmasters.org/Find.

Get advice from an experienced Toastmaster

Talking to or meeting with an experienced Toastmaster in your area who has gone through the process is a great way to get your club started. This person can provide you with encouragement and advice and is often excited and willing to help.

You can also contact the New Clubs team at Toastmasters International World Headquarters at +1 720-439-5050 or newclubs@toastmasters.org to assist you in getting started.



"I moved to Brazil at the end of 2011 because I wanted new challenges in my life. I started the English-speaking VOETM club and

was very involved as its president. Seeing people become more confident in their roles as club officers was very rewarding."

Susan Hawkins, DTM
VOETM and São Paulo Toastmasters clubs,
São Paulo, Brazil

► DID YOU KNOW?

Toastmasters International is structured into geographical areas called Districts and each District has a team of Toastmasters leaders whose central role is to support starting a new club. They can provide you with help, encouragement and advice. Contact the New Clubs team for assistance in locating the District leader in your area.

STEP 2: WHAT KIND OF CLUB DO YOU WANT TO FORM?

There are two main types of Toastmasters clubs—corporate and community-based.

Corporate club

A corporate club is affiliated with a sponsoring organization and attracts membership from its employee base. For example, AT&T, Apple, The Boeing Company, The Coca-Cola Companies, Google, Sony, and many other Fortune 500 companies sponsor Toastmasters clubs.

If you decide to start a corporate club, there are a few things to keep in mind. Club meetings can be held onsite during business hours to make it convenient for employees to attend. When corporate clubs choose to accept only employees of that organization as members, the club is considered “closed.” Corporate clubs may decide to include members who are not employees; in this case the clubs are identified as “open.” If your company chooses to sponsor your club, it may offer support in a number of ways, including:

- ▶ Providing meeting accommodations
- ▶ Payment of the one-time charter fee
- ▶ Reimbursement of payment in full or partial membership dues and new-member fees
- ▶ Incentives for achieving educational goals
- ▶ Formal integration of Toastmasters meetings in the organization’s training program



“I have been promoted at my job six times since becoming a Toastmaster. Every speaking and leadership opportunity advances your own skills and helps others along the way.”

Jing Humphreys, DTM
Senior Regulatory Advisor
Sonneborn, LLC

For more information on how to start a corporate club, email corporaterelations@toastmasters.org. This team can put you in touch with volunteer Toastmasters leaders around the world who will meet with your organization to determine your needs and how Toastmasters can help.

▶ DID YOU KNOW?

Toastmasters clubs in the workplace are a cost effective way to develop, enhance, and retain staff. Additionally, they can lead to employees with enhanced soft skills, improved meeting facilitations, communications, public speaking and leadership skills, and more confident staff who can think better on their feet.

Community club

A community club is generally open to anyone and is not tied to a sponsoring organization. It is usually formed so that people can come together to improve their communication and leadership skills. Community club meetings are typically held at local restaurants, schools, community centers, or libraries.

Requirements for all clubs

Whether you're forming a community or corporate club, it must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ Clubs must meet at least 12 times per year.
- ▶ Regular meetings must be conducted in person, online, or a combination of on premise and online.
- ▶ Clubs determine the type of online platform(s) to be used and must acquire it at the club's expense if there is a fee for use.
- ▶ Members participating in online club meetings will provide their own technology at their own expense if there is a fee for use.
- ▶ Members must give speeches in person and give and receive verbal evaluations.
- ▶ Members must be afforded the opportunity to develop and practice leadership skills.

STEP 3: REQUEST A CLUB SPONSOR

The good news is you don't have to build your club alone. Club Sponsors must be assigned within 60 days of your club's charter date. You can request up to two club sponsors to help you with:

- ▶ Marketing your new club to prospective members
- ▶ Presenting demonstration meetings
- ▶ Completing forms

For more information about club sponsors, email newclubs@toastmasters.org.

STEP 4: GENERATE INTEREST

Get your corporate club started

To start a corporate club, it is important to gain the support of a decision-maker within your organization who can champion your club's formation. Follow these steps:

- ▶ Schedule an appointment with your human resources director or a potential executive sponsor. Use the **corporate marketing letter** to introduce and promote Toastmasters as an opportunity for new hires and current employees.
- ▶ Prepare for the meeting with your human resources director and be ready to discuss the value an onsite club can bring to your organization. Use the **Corporate Club flier** and **Benefits of Toastmasters Membership flier** to talk through your points along with the **Introductory Meeting Presentation**.



"My passion, and frankly admiration, for Toastmasters goes deep as I have rarely seen a program that commits to storytelling with such ease and conviction.

We all know how important communication is in business and in life and how daunting it can be to many; Toastmasters' program develops confidence in people's ability to effectively communicate."

Mike Fasulo
Executive Board Director,
Former President, COO & CMO
Sony Electronics Inc.

- ▶ Ask for your organization's support in forming the new club and determine what portion of the club costs your organization will pay, if any. Often, the organization pays the charter and new-member fees, while members pay their own dues. Some organizations pay for the club banner and other club materials or supply the meeting location.
- ▶ Plan and conduct a demonstration meeting that shows the benefits of Toastmasters to both the individual and the organization. A demonstration meeting also explains how a club meeting is conducted. You can find more information about demonstration meetings on page 11.

Publicize the demonstration meeting:

- ▶ Ask your human resources representative for assistance with promoting your club.
- ▶ Post notices on the company's intranet and bulletin boards.
- ▶ Invite fellow employees and extend a special invitation to your company's key decision-makers.
- ▶ Promotional materials are available at www.toastmasters.org/StartAClubMarketing.

Get your community club started

If you are starting a community club and have a club sponsor(s), then you are ready to begin! In order to charter a new club, you need to have a minimum of 20 members, only three of whom may be members of another club (referred to as "dual" members). The remaining 17 members can be new, reinstated, or transfer members.

Work with your club sponsors to:

- ▶ Designate the right location, meeting time, and video conferencing platform (if allowing online attendance) for your club meetings, ensuring that location, time, and platform accommodate at least 20 members.
- ▶ Plan a demonstration meeting that highlights the benefits of Toastmasters membership and shows how a club meeting is conducted. (See page 11).

Next, publicize the demonstration meeting:

- ▶ Send personal invitations via email, Facebook, etc. to colleagues, friends or anyone in your community who could benefit from improved communication and leadership skills.
- ▶ Submit announcements to local newspapers and broadcast media.
- ▶ Post notices on community websites, social media platforms, and bulletin boards.
- ▶ Provide each visitor with a copy of or digital access to the Charter Membership Application (See **page 17** in Appendix B).
- ▶ Promotional materials are available at www.toastmasters.org/StartAClubMarketing.

Once you have 20 members, select three separate members to hold the temporary offices of president, vice president and secretary/treasurer. Then complete the "Application to Organize a Toastmasters Club" in Appendix B on **page 17**.

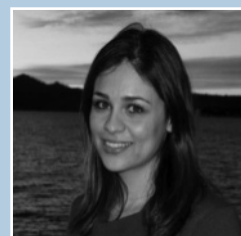
To create marketing materials, use the resources found at www.toastmasters.org/StartAClubMarketing. For Online Meeting materials, use the resources found at www.toastmasters.org/Online-Meetings. You can also refer to the *Let the World Know: Publicity and Promotion Handbook* (Item 1140) for ideas on how to promote your club to the media with news releases.

Remember to safeguard the Toastmasters brand

When you create any promotional material, it's important to remember that the Toastmasters brand is recognized throughout the world. By maintaining the integrity of the Toastmasters brand, trademarks and copyrights, you ensure that a consistent message is communicated in all club locations. This, in turn, increases understanding and global awareness of Toastmasters International. Your role is to safeguard the Toastmasters brand, trademarks, and copyrights by ensuring that all Toastmasters materials used or created by your club comply with appropriate copyright and trademark laws and **Toastmasters' guidelines**.

► TIP

The Toastmasters World Headquarters Trademarks and Brand teams are available to review all marketing materials, such as fliers, trophies, banners, apparel, etc. To ensure you are adhering to all guidelines, submit your club's promotional materials to trademarks@toastmasters.org and brand@toastmasters.org.



"I want to be able to make a difference in the world and effectively deliver my message so I can inspire people to take their lives to the next level. This wouldn't

be possible without effective communication—one of the most important things I learned at Toastmasters."

Sara Safari, DTM
Keynote speaker, Author
Irvine Lunchtime Toastmasters Club,
Irvine, California, USA

STEP 5: CHARTER YOUR CLUB AND SET UP A BANK ACCOUNT

These are critical steps to forming your club. To make your club an official Toastmasters club, you must charter. Fill out these seven forms to complete your club's charter (See **page 17** in Appendix B).

To begin the chartering process, you should complete the "Application to Organize a Toastmasters Club" along with the other forms above and submit it with the \$125 USD charter fee. All of the necessary forms are located on page 17 in Appendix B.

► **TIP**

To ensure your club will charter swiftly, ensure all seven forms are completed fully and typed or written legibly. Remember, you can complete the Application to Organize Form 1 online [here](#).

Open a bank account

Set up a bank account to deposit your club dues. For help opening a bank account, contact irsquestions@toastmasters.org. If you are starting a club in the United States refer to page 15 of Appendix A.

Note: If your club has collected payments, but does not have a bank account of its own, it may designate a club officer to hold the payments until the club has opened an account or until payments are sent to World Headquarters. Your club may deposit payments into another club's account temporarily. Send additional financial questions to financequestions@toastmasters.org.

► **TIP**

Collect payments for dues and fees during or soon after your club's first meeting. All payments to Toastmasters International must be in U.S. dollars. If sending funds by wire, plan for any intermediary fees charged by your local bank.

STEP 6: CELEBRATE!

Once you have completed and submitted all of the charter forms, your club will receive its official charter. Now is the time to share the good news! The presentation of the charter marks the debut of your new Toastmasters club. It also offers an excellent opportunity to recognize individuals who helped form the club and to generate publicity. Be sure to invite the following people:

Corporate Club:

- Fellow co-workers
- Supervisors and/or managers
- Human resources department and executives of the company

Community Club:

- Members of the sponsoring club
- Friends and family of the new members
- Members of nearby Toastmasters clubs
- Local community and business leaders
- District Director and other District leaders

At this time, you may also be assigned a club mentor. These experienced Toastmasters can help you by:

- ▶ Supporting your new club during the first six to 12 months (after being chartered)
- ▶ Guiding you to create a quality club experience
- ▶ Deciding to join your club

▶ **TIP**

Before selecting a date for the charter celebration, allow for enough time to receive the club charter and charter member certificates (two to six weeks for clubs within the U.S. or Canada, and four to eight weeks for all other club locations).

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR

All club members contribute to the atmosphere of the club. During your first year while your club has support from sponsors and mentors, it's important to foster a positive, pleasant environment so existing members can enjoy their experiences and potential members are encouraged to join. Here are a few more tips to help you succeed with your new club:

1. Find a meeting location that is pleasant and comfortable.
 - If allowing online attendance, ensure you find a video conferencing platform that is well-supported, easy to use, and allows members to interact (chat, etc.). Select a platform that is secure and supports features like a waiting room or unique or protected meeting invitations, such as password protected meetings to avoid any uninvited guest(s).
2. Start and end all meetings on time.
3. Ensure your Sergeant at Arms sets up the room in advance.
 - If allowing online attendance, designate a club member with a technical background to test the video conferencing platform in advance. When admitting attendees, ensure that only known guests and members are admitted.
4. Greet guests warmly, and introduce them to others.
5. Ask guests to fill out a guest information form or sign a guest book and invite them to become members when they visit.
6. Provide each member and guest with a meeting agenda.
7. Enthusiastically participate and fill in for those who are unable to attend. Meeting planning and organization are critical to club success.
8. Explain the meeting roles and the responsibilities involved for each role to the members.
9. Inform participants of their responsibilities at least one week in advance.
10. Have the Topicsmaster prepare thought-provoking Table Topics®.
11. Base evaluations of speeches on project objectives and the individual learning needs of the member.
12. Use materials consistent with the Toastmasters brand to present a unified look and message.

Periodically refer to the **Moments of Truth Club Evaluation Chart** (Item 290B) to ensure your club is offering a quality experience.

Ready, set, go!

Now you're on your way to getting started. For even more tips and tools to help you lead and grow your club in the first few months, visit www.toastmasters.org. Connect with other members by joining Toastmasters on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

DEMONSTRATION MEETING GUIDELINES

The demonstration meeting gives you the opportunity to share the benefits of Toastmasters with prospective members. Prior to the meeting, you will assign club roles (listed below) and guide prospective members through a typical meeting.

Toastmasters' meeting roles are as follows:

- ▶ Toastmaster
- ▶ Timer
- ▶ Ah-Counter or grammarian
- ▶ General evaluator
- ▶ Speaker
- ▶ Evaluator
- ▶ Topicsmaster

For more details about meeting roles, refer to **Meeting Roles and Responsibilities** (Item 295).

Before and at the demonstration meeting, keep the following in mind:

- ▶ Choose eight or more Toastmasters to conduct the meeting (although you may still have one with fewer).
- ▶ Select a team that mirrors the audience's demographics.
- ▶ Keep the meeting short and don't go over the time that was specified. Your goal is to create interest.
- ▶ Include a short Table Topics session, a prepared speech, and an evaluation.
- ▶ Select one speaker who is relatable to your audience who can speak about a topic that ties into the theme of the new club.
- ▶ To form a corporate club, invite representatives from and/or the decision-makers of the sponsoring organization, if any. Their presence will confirm the meeting's importance. Invite influential members of your community to form a community club.

▶ TIP

Conduct a test meeting to practice using the video conference platform. Invite other Toastmasters members to assist in the test meeting. This will help to avoid common challenges often experienced with running a video conference meeting.

After the meeting:

- ▶ Ask members to share Toastmasters success stories.
- ▶ Introduce potential club sponsors and club mentors, emphasizing that when the club is chartered, both will provide support.
- ▶ Announce the date, time, and place of the next meeting, and share the video conferencing link and password for an online meeting.
- ▶ Let prospective members know that the new-member fee is \$25 USD per person and the semiannual membership dues are \$60 USD per person. Collect these payments along with completed application forms for those who decide to join.
- ▶ Clarify that Toastmasters clubs are required to send payment for membership dues semiannually to be collected by April 1 and October 1. Clubs chartering in March or September may wish to submit their renewal dues at that time to avoid collecting dues from each member twice in two months. For details, please see Form 2, Line 6.
- ▶ Conduct a brief question-and-answer session.

View the **Club Experience Video** to learn more.

DEMONSTRATION MEETING OBJECTIVES AND SAMPLE AGENDA

MEETING DATE: _____

OBJECTIVES:

- ▶ Demonstrate how a typical Toastmasters meeting is run.
- ▶ Show the benefits and value of being a Toastmasters member.
- ▶ Discuss the charter process.

MEETING AGENDA:

Explanation and assignment of key meeting roles

- ▶ Toastmaster (Name):
- ▶ Timer (Name):
- ▶ Ah-Counter and grammarian (Name):
- ▶ General evaluator (Name):
- ▶ Evaluator (Name):
- ▶ Topicsmaster (Name):

Table Topics Session

Introduction of Speaker

- ▶ Speaker (Name):
- ▶ Evaluator (Name):

General Evaluation

Discussion of the Charter Process

- ▶ Explain Toastmasters International's dues structure and determine club dues.

Additional Resources:

- ▶ *A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats* (Item 1167D)
- ▶ Features, Benefits and Value Chart
- ▶ Club Experience Video

FOLLOW UP

Often, prospective clubs meet several times before they can complete the charter requirements. Your goal is to keep everyone enthusiastic and charter the new club as quickly as possible.

To maintain momentum, remember to:

- ▶ Send a thank-you note to all attendees.
- ▶ Follow up with a phone call and email a meeting reminder several days before the next meeting.
- ▶ Communicate with temporary officers and scheduled meeting participants to confirm duties for the next meeting.

APPENDIX A

Splitting a club

Toastmasters International recommends that a club have 20 to 30 members. Clubs with more than 40 members may benefit from splitting into two clubs.

When you submit the charter paperwork and payment for a club forming from an existing club, include a letter stating that the club is splitting. Transferring members do not pay membership dues or new-member fees as long as their dues are current in the club from which they are transferring.

Each club must have a minimum of 20 members after splitting. All members of the new club may be transfer members. Before a club may split, members of the existing club must agree to split. Be sure that experienced, active members are evenly divided into both clubs.

Advanced clubs

Occasionally, a group chooses to charter a special club with a requirement that its members have already achieved a advanced Toastmasters education award, have progressed to a certain level within the Toastmasters program, or have held a certain level of leadership role. In these clubs, members focus on developing advanced skills, hear advanced-level presenters, and receive evaluations and feedback from other experienced members.

Advanced clubs must have a minimum of 20 members to charter and follow the same charter process as other clubs. Some advanced clubs require that members belong to another club. This is referred to as a “dual membership.” If an advanced club decides on this membership requirement, all 20 members of the club must be dual members. Of these members only three of the first 20 members may transfer one of their existing club memberships into the new club; these members must still belong to two clubs after they transfer out of one club and into the new club. (A transfer refers to a member who has paid dues in one club and would like to move their membership to another club; dues are not paid to the new club until the following dues-renewal period.). When chartering, the club must indicate its membership requirements and include the reason(s) why the club would like to be considered as advanced on the Addendum of Standard Club Options (Form 6B), under Membership Composition.

Online attendance

You will want to consider which meeting format best accommodates the members of your club. Will your club meet in person, online, or a combination of in person and online? Each meeting format has its

advantages and challenges. For example, in person meetings are great for forming connections and natural networking but a challenge may be finding a meeting space. If your club meets in a hybrid environment, both online and in-person, you'll have to make sure you have the right technology to accommodate both. You can find some tips for hybrid meetings [here](#).

Online meetings enable diversity in membership by allowing members to join from around the world and enhancement of professional development skills and technological experience through online meeting management. Some members may not be as technically savvy or feel as connected to their club. You can find online meeting tips [here](#).

Clubs that allow online attendance must have a minimum of 20 members to charter and follow the typical charter process. Additionally, clubs that allow online attendance can be of any club type (community, company, college, government, etc.) and can also choose to be open to anyone or restricted to a specific group.

Governing documents

Each club is governed by the policies of the organization. The **Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International** is the club's main governing document.

Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International

A club may amend portions of the Addendum of Standard Club Options as long as they do not conflict with the **Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International** or the **Policies and Protocol** of the organization. Amendments may be made with a two-thirds vote. See the **Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International**, Article XII: Amendments to Club Constitution. Notify Toastmasters International online at www.toastmasters.org/ClubCentral or in writing of any proposed changes. The changes are reviewed and, if not in conflict with the Club Constitution, the information is kept on file. Changes to a club name, location, meeting time, and place are made in **Club Central**. You can also submit the information to World Headquarters by letter or email it to clubquality@toastmasters.org.

Opening a new club bank account in the U.S.

To open a new club bank account in the United States, you must use the club's unique Employer Identification Number (EIN). Each club's EIN is available on the Toastmasters website in Club Central on the Club Demographics section. United States tax law requires all U.S. clubs to have an EIN. When your club completes its initial chartering process, World Headquarters will send an EIN application to the IRS on behalf of your club. Once the IRS grants the EIN, a club can open its own bank account. Typically, the bank will want a copy of the following:

- ▶ The EIN assignment letter you received from the IRS
- ▶ Club meeting minutes indicating current officers who are authorized by the club as signers on the bank account.
- ▶ Your club's charter documents, including the Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International and Addendum of Standard Club Options
- ▶ Online clubs are assigned an EIN upon request.

Club compliance with Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)

All club officers must take necessary measures to ensure their club and its members are in compliance with policies set by OFAC, a department that administers sanction programs based on U.S. foreign policy and national security. To ensure compliance, first find out if the country in which your club will be formed is on

the sanctioned countries list at www.treasury.gov/Resource-Center/Sanctions/Programs. If it is, then check for members' names on the Specifically Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN) at sdnsearch.ofac.treas.gov. Contact legal@toastmasters.org if a member's name appears on the SDN list, or if you have questions.

Liability insurance

Your club's meeting place could require insurance coverage. If so, send a request for a copy of the Certificate of Liability Insurance to tinsurance@toastmasters.org. If the venue requests a customized certificate, follow the instructions available at www.toastmasters.org/LiabilityInsurance.

APPENDIX B

FORMS

CHARTER FORMS CHECKLIST

The official charter date is when all charter forms and payments are received by Toastmasters International World Headquarters. Downloadable forms are available in the Resource Library under the category **Starting a Club**.

Complete and submit the following forms and payment:

- ☐ **Form 1** **Application to Organize a Toastmasters Club**
- ☐ **Form 2** **Charter Payments:**
 - \$125 USD: charter fee with the Application to Organize (if not previously sent)
 - \$25 USD: new-member fee per person
 - \$60 USD six months' membership dues per person
- ☐ **Form 3** **Charter Membership Application** (one required per member)
Applications must be signed by both the applicant and club officer.
- ☐ **Form 4** **Charter Club Officer Information**
- ☐ **Form 5** **Club Information**
- ☐ **Form 6A** **Club Constitution for Clubs of Toastmasters International**
- ☐ **Form 6B** **Addendum of Standard Club Options**

Clubs chartering in September or March (the last months of the dues renewals periods) may wish to submit membership dues amounting to \$70 USD per person. The extra \$10.00 USD per person will be used to pay the prorated renewal dues. By doing this, your club will not have to collect dues from each member twice in two months.

Please note: All payments must be in U.S. dollars

SEND COMPLETED FORMS AND PAYMENT TO:

Toastmasters International New Clubs

Mailing Address: 9127 South Jamaica Street, Suite 400 • Englewood, CO 80112 • USA

Email: newclubs@toastmasters.org

Phone: +1 720-439-5050

Fax: +1 303-799-7753



toastmasters.org