

Guide to Organizing a JOI District

Junior Optimist International

Table of Contents

WHAT IS A JOI DISTRICT?	3
HOW A JOI DISTRICT FUNCTIONS.....	4
PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IN ORGANIZING A JOI DISTRICT	6
ESTABLISHING A COMMITTEE TO PLAN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONVENTION	7
THE 1 st JOI DISTRICT CONVENTION.....	8
JUNIOR OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT BYLAWS.....	11-13

What is a JOI District?

Junior Optimist International (JOI) was created to enable kids to do community service. JOI reached the international level in 1989. Since that time, JOI has grown to 17,600 Members in 690 Clubs throughout the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and France. JOI encompasses all youth Clubs sponsored by Optimist (OI) Clubs as well as non-sponsored Clubs. The JOI Board of Directors is comprised of a President, a Past President, and four (4) Directors. The JOI Policy for Governance governs the Board of Directors as well as all JOI Clubs.

A JOI District plays the same role as an OI District. It serves as a geographical and administrative subdivision of JOI. In general, a JOI District possesses the same territorial boundaries as its corresponding OI District.

A JOI District allows member Clubs the opportunity to create ties with each other, exchange ideas, assist each other in times of need, strengthen the organization as a whole, to better know the objectives of JOI Clubs and to facilitate communication among Clubs.

A JOI District also serves as a convenient means for an OI District to promote its most rewarding activity, JOI Clubs.

How a JOI District Functions

A JOI District's structure strongly resembles that of an OI District, but some specific differences exist between OI and JOI, and for this reason JOI needs its own structure.

First, a JOI District exists within the same territorial limits as its corresponding OI District. Therefore, all JOI Clubs affiliated belong to a JOI District. To organize a JOI District, at least four JOI Clubs are required.

We can compare the construction of a JOI District to that of a building. A certain number of Clubs are necessary for the foundation with new Clubs continuously added to build a solid construction. Of course, we need workers, in this case members of Optimist Sponsor Clubs and, above all Optimist District Officers who will be ready to work with JOI Clubs and give their time, time and more time.

Just as each JOI Club has a chairman to serve as a liaison between the JOI Club and the Sponsor Club, the Optimist Sponsor District must nominate a District JOI Clubs Chairperson. The Chairperson has the responsibility of working with the officers of the JOI District. The chair's role is described in detail later in the Guide.

The District Chairperson may designate "assistants" responsible for different regions within the District. We strongly recommend naming several assistants. The Chair is the only Optimist member included in the JOI District structure. Concerning basic administrative structure, we recommend that it include a Governor, several Lieutenant Governors, a Secretary-Treasurer, a Governor Elect and a Past Governor. Lieutenant Governors should be elected by a group of two or three Clubs, based on the size of the zone. For example, three Clubs from the same zone should elect one Lieutenant Governor. It is recommended that a JOI Club zone be assigned the same zone number as the corresponding Optimist Club zone. If a zone has only one Club, it should be joined with a neighboring zone. Or, a lieutenant Governor could be in charge of several zones containing one Club per zone.

The Governor will be elected at the first JOI District Convention. The Governor's term begins at the start of next fiscal year. (The Convention generally takes place in May and the fiscal year begins October 1st).

The Secretary-Treasurer is either elected or appointed by the Governor. We recommend that he or she be appointed, since the Governor will be working closely with the Secretary-Treasurer whose role is mainly administrative.

The most powerful governing body in the JOI District is the General Assembly of the District Convention. Each Club is invited to send delegates to the Convention who then vote on important issues and help decide what direction the District will take. All JOI Clubs, as well as the District Board of Directors, are governed by the decisions of The General Assembly

That is basically how a JOI District functions. As you read on, you will learn more specific aspects of organizing a JOI District. We will examine in detail the procedures for organizing a JOI District, how to promote an awards program, district committees, and finally, following-up on the JOI District.

If you need more detailed information or assistance, call the JOI Clubs Department at (800) 500-8130.

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Procedures To Follow In Organizing A JOI District

Authorization of the Sponsor District

When the Governor of an Optimist District decides to organize a JOI District in order to promote JOI Clubs in his or her District, he or she must get in touch with an Optimist member who loves working with young people, especially adolescents, and who is quite familiar with the overall structure of Optimist International.

The Governor should first of all discuss the idea of a JOI District with the interested member and consider appointing him or her District JOI Clubs Chairperson. Both should then learn all the steps necessary to organize a JOI District. Sometimes it may take a few years from the time the District is organized to the time it attains a certain level of autonomy.

After appointing the District JOI Clubs Chairperson, the Governor should bring the idea before the District Board of Directors. Since the JOI District will outlast the present Optimist District administration, the entire District's support is necessary for the JOI District to thrive after the next team takes office.

The next step will be taken at the District Convention. At this time the General Assembly must approve the sponsorship of a JOI District. Since this involves the creation of a new level in the organization, it also implies more financial involvement. The Optimist Clubs will be called upon to make voluntary donations and JOI District Officers will conduct fundraising sales at Optimist meetings and conventions.

In addition, a JOI District implies responsibility. The JOI District must be nurtured, and for this reason, Optimist Members are appointed JOI Clubs Chair, etc.

Once the General Assembly approves the organization of the JOI District, you may proceed to the next step.

Establishing A Committee To Plan the Organizational Convention

The District JOI Clubs Chairperson must appoint a committee to plan the Convention, which will be held in April or May. This committee should include the JOI Clubs Chair and several JOI Club leaders, one of whom could potentially serve as Governor. An advisor from a host-area Club should also serve on the committee.

One of the first tasks for the committee is to set the date of the Convention. It should last one to two days. Since the objective of the Convention is to formally organize the District, planning the Convention represents the most important goal for the first year.

During the course of the year until the Convention is actually held, committee members should attend all Optimist District Assemblies in order to get an idea of the role each District Officer plays and to learn as much as possible about Optimist operations in general. The JOI Convention should be promoted at Optimist meetings as much as possible.

During the year of preparation, the committee should locate JOI Club members in each zone willing and able to serve as Lieutenant Governor for the following year. The Optimist Lieutenant-Governor should convene and preside a zone meeting for all JOI Clubs in the zone at which time the JOI Clubs will elect their Lieutenant Governor. Zones containing only one Club should be annexed by an adjoining zone. The elected Lieutenant Governors must attend the Convention but only begin their term in October.

A written invitation to the Convention should be sent to all Lieutenant Governors Elects, JOI Clubs, and the Optimist District Governor. It is essential to have the largest number of Club Presidents, Secretary-Treasurers and Advisors present at the Convention. Do not forget to nominate a candidate for the office of Governor and to obtain rosters for all JOI Clubs in the District from the International Office at least one month before the Convention.

The First JOI District Convention

The Convention Planning Committee must determine the date (Saturday and/or Sunday) and the location of the Convention.

Since the Convention lasts one to two days it is best to find a school or a campground large enough to accommodate the participants. Hotels and restaurants are not recommended since they tend to be expensive and one of the organization's goals is to get as many young people involved as possible. Meals and accommodations should not cost more than about \$30.

Because the JOI Club District has not yet been organized, the Optimist Governor will preside at this assembly. What follows is a sample agenda including the most important points, along with a brief description of each point.

This is also the most important moment in the history of any JOI District; official organization. This is the day the Clubs must decide whether they want to form a district organization governed by JOI Members.

The Optimist Governor will preside over the beginning of this assembly, but once the elections have taken place, the newly elected JOI Governor will preside over the assembly.

PRELIMINARY ASSEMBLY IN PREPARATION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE _____ JOI DISTRICT

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

The Governor calls the assembly to order

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions of District/International leaders

- The Optimist Governor
- The Optimist Secretary-Treasurer
- The JOI Representative
- The JOI Clubs Committee Chair

WELCOME

Governor, JOI District Chair, and other officials

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Read and adopt agenda

- The participants must approve the agenda. However, it is not necessary to take notes because the assembly is not governed by a constitution.

MIXERS/ICEBREAKER

JOI CLUB REPORTS

JOI DISTRICT EXPLAINED

A District/International Representative explains the nature of a JOI District, its operation, and the organizational chart of both JOI and OI.

MOTION TO ORGANIZE A JOI DISTRICT

The Clubs vote on whether or not the District should be formally organized. At this stage, each Club has only one vote.

DISTRICT BYLAWS

The Optimist Secretary-Treasurer should pass around a copy of the proposed Bylaws to each Club and briefly explain the issues to be voted. The JOI Policy for Governance should also be distributed.

At this time, the JOI Clubs Committee Chair, with the help of the Optimist Governor should read the District Bylaws prepared beforehand. It is extremely important to explain to the delegates that now is the time to speak out and ask any questions they may have. The meeting room should have a microphone to allow delegates to express their opinion.

The Optimist members present should keep in mind that they are there to act as counselor/advisors and that decisions should be made exclusively by JOI members.

All amendments and propositions must be proposed and seconded by the Clubs. When the Bylaws are completed, they must be read and adopted in their entirety by the assembly. The District is considered officially organized after the Bylaws are adopted.

ROLE OF DISTRICT OFFICERS

The District JOI Clubs Committee Chair explains the role and responsibilities of each District Officer.

ELECTION OF GOVERNOR AND OTHER DISTRICT OFFICERS

The Optimist Governor introduces the candidates for the office of Governor, Secretary-Treasurer, Lt. Governors, and Governor Elect. The election process is explained.

A Governor must be elected from among the official candidates. It is recommended to have already impressed upon each of the candidates, through personal interviews, the great responsibility of the position.

For this election, each Club should have a certain number of votes as determined in the District Bylaws.

JOI ENDOWMENT FUND

JOI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

OTHER BUSINESS

CLOSING REMARKS

JOI Governor and District JOI Chair

OPTIMIST CREED/YOUTH CODE

ADJOURN

.....

The first JOI District convention is now completed. The JOI District has been officially organized. Relations between the JOI District and the Optimist District should be very close for the next two years, with the JOI District becoming gradually more autonomous thereafter but never losing a close sense of cooperation with the Optimist District.

**ALPHA, JUNIOR OPTIMIST & OCTAGON INTERNATIONAL
DISTRICT BYLAWS**

As of _____

DISTRICT OF: _____

ARTICLE I: NAME

This District shall be known as the District of Alpha, Junior Optimist International of: _____.

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES

The sole purpose of this District shall be:

- a. To function as an administrative division of JOI in the attainment of the purposes set forth in the Policies of JOI and to make effective the policies, programs and purposes of JOI.
- b. To give direction to and stimulate leadership, administration and growth of Member Clubs and to encourage their participation in the purposes, programs and Policies of JOI to the benefit of their communities and nations.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: The membership in this District shall consist of Alpha Clubs, Junior Optimist Clubs in the _____ District of Optimist International.

Section 2: Eligible Clubs may apply for membership in the form and manner prescribed by the Board of Directors and may be admitted to membership upon affirmation of good standing and dues paid.

Section 3: The Board of Directors shall be empowered to suspend or expel a Member Club for non-payment of dues, failure to conform to these bylaws, for conduct unbecoming a Member Club, under the auspices of Optimist International and the _____ District.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Section 1: The officers of this District shall be the Governor, the Governor-Elect, immediate past Governor, the Lieutenant Governors or Directors, the District Secretary/Treasurer, and one member from each administrative zone in the _____ District of Optimist International.

Section 2: Under the general supervision of the JOI Board of Directors, it shall be the duty of the Governor to further the purposes of Junior Optimist International and the District, and to promote the interest and coordinate the work of member clubs within the District. In conjunction with the District JOI Clubs Chair, he shall plan the annual JOI District convention, publish a District newsletter and generally oversee and encourage JOI Club activities within the District. Likewise, he will regularly communicate with the Clubs in the District, the JOI Clubs Department and the Optimist International District.

The Governor shall, as the Executive Officer of the District preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors, be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee and perform such other duties as ordinarily incumbent upon a Governor.

Section 3: The Governor-Elect shall perform such duties as are ordinarily incumbent upon a Governor-Elect and assist in the planning and promotion of the annual JOI convention of the District and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Governor and Board of Directors.

Section 4: The Lieutenant Governor or Director under the general supervision of the JOI Governor, will coordinate the activities of an assigned group of Clubs. He shall communicate with the Governor and attend all District meetings. In cooperation with the Governor, he shall assist with the annual JOI District convention and promote the District convention and the International JOI Convention.

Section 5: The Secretary/Treasurer under the general supervision of the JOI Governor shall record minutes of the Board of Directors meeting and process all correspondence. He shall conduct such correspondence as may be required by the Governor and the District JOI Board of Directors, and generally perform such duties as are incumbent upon a secretary. He shall also keep and maintain financial records and books ordinarily kept by a treasurer, and such books shall be open at all times for inspection by the District JOI Board of Directors and any auditor designated by the Board. The Optimist District Secretary shall be responsible for all funds.

He shall assist in the planning of the District convention and shall promote, in cooperation with the Governor, the District convention and the International convention.

He shall submit regular financial statements in the form, manner and frequency prescribed by the District JOI Board, and generally perform such duties as are incumbent upon a treasurer, under the supervision of the Optimist District Secretary.

ARTICLE V: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: The Board of Directors of each District shall consist of the Governor, the Governor-elect, the immediate past Governor, the Lieutenant Governors or Directors, the District Secretary/Treasurer and the President or a representative of each Club in the District.

Section 2: The Board of Directors and the Optimist International District JOI Clubs Chair shall be responsible for the conduct of the business and affairs of the District as an administrative division of JOI, as stated in these Policies and as determined by the Board of Directors of JOI.

Section 3: The Governor shall call a meeting of the Board of Directors at such time and place as he may determine with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors and the District JOI Clubs Chair.

Section 4: A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and a majority vote of those present shall be necessary to give effect to any action of the Board.

ARTICLE VI: DISTRICT CONVENTION

Section 1: Annual Convention. A Convention of the Clubs in each District shall be held annually.

Section 2: Convention Date. The annual District Convention shall be held no later than August 15 with an official District Conference Report turned into the JOI Clubs Department no later than September 1.

Section 3: Notice of Annual Convention. The JOI District Secretary/Treasurer shall mail to each member Club in the District an official call for the Annual Convention at least 60 days prior to the date thereof, in which notice the time and place of the Annual Convention set forth. All Districts shall notify Optimist International JOI Clubs Department of their Convention date.

Section 4: Number of Votes. In the transaction of Convention business requiring a vote, each Club in the District in good standing with both JOI and the District shall be entitled to one vote.

Section 5: Accredited Delegates. No Member shall be deemed to be an accredited delegate unless he has registered at the Convention, paid the registration fee and produced such credentials to the Credentials Committee as may be required by the District Board of Directors.

Section 6: Convention Rules. Adoption of Convention rules, shall be the first business in order. These rules shall be adopted by majority vote, but may be suspended, rescinded or amended after their adoption by a two thirds vote.

ARTICLE VII: DISTRICT REVENUE

Section 1: Annual Dues. The administration of District business shall be financed by District dues and other revenues.

ARTICLE VIII: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1: Notice of District meeting. The JOI District Secretary/Treasurer shall notify each Club in the District at least 30 days prior to the date thereof, official notice of a District meeting, such notice to contain the time and place of said meeting.

Section 2: Terms and Qualifications.

- a. Terms: All District Officers shall take office on the first day of Optimist International's administrative year.

Qualifications: No one shall be eligible to hold a District office unless he is duly enrolled on the JOI roster as a Member in good standing of a JOI Club.