

How to Start a Club

Don't see your geographic region represented on our list of [IOWA Club Locations](#)? Consider working with the UI Alumni Association to establish a new Recognized IOWA Club. Organizing an IOWA Club in your area can be both fun and rewarding. It's the perfect way to stay connected to the University of Iowa, develop a local network of fellow Hawkeyes, give back to your local community, and support the UI Alumni Association. Strong leadership and commitment are the foundation for a successful IOWA Club.

The following steps outline the club formation process. More information on each step is available in the [IOWA Club Leader Handbook](#).

Step 1: Join the UI Alumni Association—All IOWA Club leaders, contacts, and key officers are required to be current UIAA members. Membership in the University of Iowa Alumni Association strengthens the university by funding alumni outreach initiatives, including IOWA Clubs. Join today by calling 800/469-2586 or visiting www.iowalum.com.

Step 2: Confirm there is no active IOWA Club—Check online at www.iowalum.com/clubs/usclubs.html to make sure an IOWA Club isn't already established in your geographic area.

Step 3: Determine how many UI alumni live in your area—Determine the appropriate Zip Code Regions to include in your proposed IOWA Club area, and then contact the UIAA IOWA Club staff at alumni-iowaclubs@uiowa.edu to see if the area includes enough UI alumni to support an active club.

Step 4: Contact local UI alumni—After the UIAA determines there are enough UI alumni in your area to support an active IOWA Club, association staff will work with you to plan an initial event and conduct a survey to determine alumni interests and willingness to assist with future programs. The UIAA will also have you complete the IOWA Club Annual Report and Certification.

Step 5: Plan an initial event—To initiate a new IOWA Club, the best kick-off events are those that are both easy to plan and require minimal involvement from attendees. Game watches and other forms of social gatherings (i.e., happy hours) are examples of enjoyable, low-involvement events. It is also a good idea to plan gatherings such as picnics that encourage family participation.

The most important aspect in planning your first event is to make sure people have fun. Welcoming your guests is the first step toward this goal. By having a registration table and nametags available, you'll initiate interaction between alumni. Try to meet as many guests as possible.

Allocate some time at your first event to give a short presentation about your hope to build a Recognized IOWA Club. Start a discussion covering basic topics, such as how many events the club would like to host and what type of programs people will attend. Be sure to ask for volunteers to help with the next activity.

Step 6: Event Follow-up—Provide an event evaluation form (sample to be provided by UIAA) available for guests to complete. This does not need to be a complicated instrument, but it will provide feedback about what alumni in your area believe would be best for this new organization. Since this is your first event, it might also be beneficial to send a thank-you note to all who attend. This thank-you should include another invitation to help plan the next program.

Step 7: Organize Initial Club Meeting—Soon after you have collected names of interested volunteers, strike while the iron is hot and plan an organizational meeting for your club. Your goals for this meeting are to provide introductions; generate ideas for events and activities; identify, solicit, and assign volunteers for specific tasks and select club leadership; and set a general sense of direction for the group.

Step 8: Complete Club Bylaws—Using the required UIAA template located [here](#), draft club bylaws. Schedule a club meeting to adopt bylaws and file documents with the UIAA.

Congratulations, your IOWA Club is now organized! Learn about other [IOWA Club Leader Resources](#) to help develop and maintain a prosperous organization.