

DISCOVERING A NEW COMMUNITY

Audience: Membership development committee, Division club building team with club members' participation where designated

Community surveys help club building teams gather data about what the community needs from people who care. They also help to identify how a new club might partner with others to address those needs and strengthen relationships with community leaders. The survey is also a way to ask important community members to join a new club and to ask for leads to other community members who might have interest.

This step-by-step tool will lead you through the survey process. Along the way, it will reveal information about how a new club's service will impact the community, partnership opportunities and possibilities for expansion. Schedule this survey before undertaking any other club building efforts in a new community. It will not only guide your efforts, but will save you expensive frustrating mistakes.

STEP 1: CREATE CONTACT LISTS

Brainstorm to identify community members who could provide the most useful information. Consider these people:

- Kiwanis partners and members of other groups with which Kiwanis has relationships in other communities.
- Community leaders
- Government officials
- Public safety officials
- School administrators
- Key teachers' as possible faculty advisors
- Chamber of Commerce leaders
- Librarians
- Members of the local media
- Hospital directors
- Members of faith-based organizations
- Key business owners
- Representatives of other organizations serving children (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs)
- Residents or commuters (to gauge community needs in an impromptu interview)

STEP 2: IDENTIFY TEAM MEMBERS

From your Division volunteers choose partners or put together small teams of two. Working in pairs or teams can make the interview more comfortable, and ensure detailed notes are taken.

STEP 3: SCHEDULE AND CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

Determine which team members will contact which people/groups — and the time frame in which interviews should be completed. Interviews can take place by email, over the phone, Zoom or in person. When it's over, ask for contact information so you can follow up (and offer your own). Dress can be casual, but must be professional and should be Kiwanis branded

If the interview is face-to-face, ensure you have the most updated Kiwanis International application and information. Keep impromptu interviews between five and 10 minutes, and scheduled ones under 30. Before conducting an interview, introduce yourself, your organization (Kiwanis International) and the purpose of the interview. Let them know that all questions are optional and they can take as much time as they wish to answer.

Whatever interview format you choose, be prepared. Anticipate how it should go, and keep it focused. Capture responses in one place, whether it's in a notepad or on a voice recorder, tablet or laptop.

Below are some sample scripts and questions to guide you.

Introducing yourself:

Hello, my name is _____, and I belong to the _____ Kiwanis Club. It's good to meet you. Our club is very active in our community. We do projects like _____, but we want to see whether there are community needs here that a new club could fulfil. To do this, we are gathering perspectives about the good in this community, as well as how volunteer service to it could be improved. Would you have a few minutes to give me your opinion? Great! Don't feel like you have to answer every question, and take as much or as little time as you need to answer.

Potential questions:

- What do you think your community does well? What do you like best about the community?
 - What would make your community a better place to live, work and play?
 - What are some unmet needs of your community? What should concern us most?
 - Which organizations or groups are working to make our community better? Which are helping to improve children's lives?
 - What is your "wish list" for your community?
 - On a scale of one to five (with one being the lowest), how involved with the community have you been in the last three years?
 - How do you see yourself getting more involved in improving the community?
 - What are the greatest barriers to community involvement for you personally (if applicable) or for community members?
 - What would get people excited about volunteering in the community?
 - Who are the most respected and influential people in your community?
 - Who else should we talk to about how we can help the community?
 - Do you have any short-term needs that a new club can assist with?
 - Are there any long-term needs that you need community assistance or support with?
 - What, if anything, is currently being done to address those needs?
 - Do you have any questions, comments or final thoughts?
- **In closing: Be sure to offer a Kiwanis business card and an application for membership in the new club!**

Thank you, _____, for your time. We really appreciate it. I'd like to exchange contact information so that I can follow up with you about [anything interesting or left unanswered]. If you think of any need in the community that we didn't talk about, please call me. The new club will have an informational meeting soon. We'd love for you to join us so we can fill you in on the ways Kiwanis will become active in the _____ area.

FOLLOW-UP NOTES

Community events that club members need to attend:

Media and marketing ideas:

Fundraising ideas:

Other people and/or organizations to contact:

STEP 4: DEBRIEF AND REFLECT

After completing community surveys, make time for a debriefing session. Collect the input from the interviews and discuss ideas for potential new service projects or fundraisers, partnerships or sponsorships, and even new members at a membership committee meeting. Questions to keep in mind:

Was any information obtained suggesting need(s) for a new club ?

Did members hear any of the same community needs?

Which seemed to be the top priority?

Was there feedback about past Kiwanis service that should be addressed?

How might a new club help resolve frequently noted community concerns?

Is there a possible community service project to which you can invite interested individuals?

What people or organizations could you create relationships with? (Look at **Developing community partnerships** for more ideas about sponsorships and partnerships.)

DREAM BIG!

Based on the needs and the ideas you've generated, think about these questions:

- If you could give this community anything, what would it be?
- What would that service project look like? Could this be the "signature service project" for which a new club could become known?
- If "Yes!" can it be tried now as a recruitment tool?
- If "No," what steps could a new club take now to make the new service project happen soon? Take a look at the **Signature Project Toolkit** to help determine your next move.

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