

3 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CLUB MORE INCLUSIVE

In more than 70 countries, the Kiwanis family consists of more than 550,000 members — from elementary school students to adults, and all ages and abilities.

With such a wide reach, Kiwanis serves many communities. And each community has its own needs. That's why Kiwanis prides itself on the diversity of its service *and* its members. But there's another key piece of a club's impact and success: inclusion.

How inclusive is your club?

Beyond inviting members from diverse backgrounds, including them in club operations will show that all opinions and contributions are valued.

After all, low retention of new members often happens because people who were excited to join were not given an opportunity to participate. Engage new members immediately! Ask for their input for improving current projects — or starting a new project that interests them.

To cultivate inclusion, here are some questions and ideas to consider:

MAKE YOUR CLUB ACCESSIBLE

- Do you meet in a location that's convenient for everyone? If not, make adjustments when possible or consider meeting in an alternate venue.
- Does your club meet at a convenient time for everyone? If not, consider alternating or changing meeting times. In addition, alternative meeting options — such as a virtual option or satellite membership — can allow all members to participate.
- Can members find meeting minutes if they are unable to attend?
 - Do your meetings and service projects accommodate members with family commitments, career constraints or religious practices?
- Does your meeting include a meal? The cost and/or time required may deter a potential new member. Consider making the meal optional.
 - Can a potential member find current information about the club on a website or social media page?
 - Are potential members included in club service projects? How is this advertised?



Diversity is when everyone is invited to the party. Equity is when everyone gets to contribute to the playlist. Inclusion means that everyone has the opportunity to dance.



MAKE ALL MEMBERS FEEL IMPORTANT

Club leaders should understand why each member is there and what activities would fulfill their passion. Yes, it's sometimes easier to do a task yourself — but handing a task to new members can be a great way to include them.

PROVIDE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING

Every club can benefit from an honest discussion about these topics. In a recent survey of Kiwanis club members in the United States, some indicated that inappropriate comments or behaviors happen at club meetings and then go unaddressed. Bring in a speaker or conduct training sessions on the following topics:

Using inclusive language. Learn about the effects our words have on creating a culture of normalized behavior. Gendered language, for instance, is a barrier toward achieving gender equality.

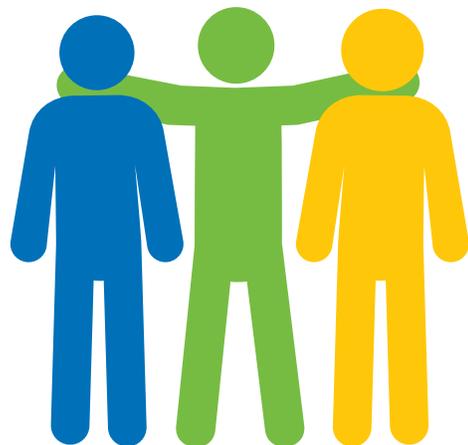
Detecting and avoiding unconscious bias and discrimination. Sometimes people can unintentionally be treated unfairly because of a personal characteristic.

Calling out inappropriate behavior as a bystander. “The standard you walk past is the standard you accept,” says David Morrison, retired lieutenant general of the Australian Army and current chair of Diversity Council Australia.

Participate in community celebrations of diversity. In fact, take time ahead of periods of recognition or observance, such as Black History Month or Yom Kippur, to learn about their history and importance.

Seek to understand your members from their perspective. Knowing members' cultural backgrounds, professions, age range, sexual orientations, gender identities and involvement in other civic organizations can help identify ways your club could diversify membership and make it more inclusive.

In a changing world, the need for service remains constant. Your club can deploy many strategies to be inclusive — and for fully meeting that need. We welcome your questions and comments. Share them at diversity@kiwanis.org.



Kiwanis