

HOW TO START A DEI COMMITTEE IN YOUR DISTRICT

Starting a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) committee in a Kiwanis district involves careful planning, clear communication and a commitment to being an inclusive and equitable organization. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you get started:

1. RESEARCH AND LEARN

- Understand the principles of DEI. Educate yourself and your team about the importance of DEI, and learn about best practices from similar organizations, or from other Kiwanis districts that have started their own DEI committees.
- See what DEI looks like within Kiwanis by reviewing our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workshop presentation (and share it with the clubs in your district) at kiwanis.org/diversity.

2. GATHER SUPPORT

- Discuss your idea with your district's key stakeholders, such as fellow members, leaders and advisors.
- Share Kiwanis International's DEI commitment statement at kiwanis.org/diversity.
- Make a strong case for why a DEI committee is necessary and how it aligns with the organization's values and mission.
- DEI works best when leaders commit to its visibility. Get their endorsement and commitment to provide necessary resources. In your district, this could involve presenting your plan to the district board, district governor, other committee chairs (including SLP chairs and advisors) or other district leaders.
- It may help to show leaders all the ready-to-use resources available at kiwanis.org/diversity.

3. IDENTIFY LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE

- Recruit enthusiastic and committed individuals who are passionate about DEI to serve on the committee. Look for people with diverse talents, abilities and experiences. Remember, different backgrounds provide different perspectives!
- Determine an optimal number of people for the committee. You need enough people to share tasks and diversity of thought, but not so many that it hinders discussion or action.

4. DEFINE PURPOSE AND GOALS

- Clearly articulate the committee's purpose and goals. What do you want to achieve? Whether it's creating more inclusive events, increasing diversity in membership or enhancing cultural awareness, well-defined goals will guide your efforts.
- Make a list of proposed goals and then prioritize them.

5. DEVELOP A PLAN

Create a detailed action plan outlining the steps the committee will take to achieve its goals. Consider areas such as membership recruitment, event planning, communication, training, financial resources and policy review.

6. COMMUNICATE WIDELY

- Announce the formation of the DEI committee to your entire district. Use newsletters, emails, social media and other communication channels to inform members about the committee's mission and goals — and how members can get involved.
- Host a DEI booth at district conventions and mid-year conferences to talk to members about this new initiative.



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7. PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY IN MEETINGS

- When organizing committee meetings, create an environment where all voices are heard.
- Set ground rules for respectful communication and encourage open discussions.
- Use inclusive language in your presentations and materials.
- Determine when, where and how often the committee will meet.

8. HOST TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

- Organize training sessions and workshops to educate members about DEI topics.
- Invite guest speakers or trainers to provide insights on cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias and other relevant subjects.
- Survey members in your district to learn what types of training they would like to attend.

9. COLLABORATE WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Partner with other Kiwanis districts, community groups or organizations that focus on diversity and inclusion. Collaborative efforts can amplify your impact.

10. EVALUATE PROGRESS

- Regularly assess the committee's progress towards its goals. A great tool for this, "Measuring Inclusion," can be easily adapted from the club level to district leadership. The "Measuring Inclusion" worksheet is available online available online at kiwanis.org/diversity.
- Seek feedback from members of your district at the one-year mark to determine how effective your DEI committee is and what new goals should be considered.

11. CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Recognize and celebrate the committee's milestones and achievements. Publicly acknowledge positive changes and the contributions of committee members.

12. STRIVE FOR CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

DEI work is an ongoing process. There are always new things to learn, new ways to do things and new perspectives to add to the conversation. Keep learning, adapting and refining your strategies based on feedback and evolving best practices.

GETTING STARTED

Starting a DEI committee is not a one-time effort; it requires ongoing dedication and collaboration. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- All decisions should be made in accordance with Kiwanis International's Non-Discrimination Policy.
- It is recommended that the committee's chair commit to no more than a two- or three-year term. This way, new ideas are constantly brought into the committee while giving the chair time to learn, implement and evaluate ideas brought forth by the committee.
- When selecting committee members, include standing positions for Circle K International, Aktion Club and Key Club leaders to join. Also include members from as many genders, races and ages as possible! Avoid selecting members that you constantly work with to prevent biases.
- DEI committee appointment must not only represent the Kiwanians in your district but also reflect the thoughts and commitment to the mission of DEI within Kiwanis.
- Remember, everything your committee does today is for the Kiwanians who come after you. Always keep an eye toward the future!

For more helpful resources on diversity, equity and inclusion within Kiwanis, go to kiwanis.org/diversity.



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