

REDISCOVERING YOUR COMMUNITY

Audience: Membership committee, with club members' participation where designated

Community surveys help clubs gather data about what the community needs from people who care. They also help to identify how the club might partner with others to address those needs and strengthen relationships with community leaders.

This step-by-step tool will lead you through the survey process. Along the way, it will reveal information about your club's service impact, partnership opportunities and possibilities for expansion. Schedule this survey annually – or any time the club has experienced significant changes in its membership or service interests.

STEP 1: CREATE CONTACT LISTS

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

- Club partners and members of other groups with which the club has a relationship
- Community leaders
- Government officials
- Public safety officials
- School administrators
- Service Leadership Programs' 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

Choose a partner or put together small teams. 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 or in person. When it's over, ask for contact information so you can follow up (and offer your own).

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 club 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 the community. We do projects like _____, but we want to see whether there are community needs that we don't know about. To do this, we are trying to gather opinions about the good in our community, as well as how 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 our community does well? What do you like best about the community?
- What would make our community a better place to live, work and play?
- What are some unmet needs of our 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 our 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?



REDISCOVERING YOUR COMMUNITY

- Who are the most respected and influential people in our community?
- Who else should we talk to about how we can help the community?
- Do you have any short-term needs that our 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!

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. Our club meets _____.

We'd love for you to join us so we can fill you in on the ways Kiwanis is already 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 club action?



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Did members hear any of the same community needs?

Which seemed to be the top priority?

Does the club have the interest and financial means to pursue new projects? (Take a look at **Analyzing your impact** for ideas on weighing the costs and benefits of potential and current projects.)

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

How might the club help resolve frequently noted community concerns?

Is there an upcoming service project to which you can invite individuals?

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

If some issues warrant further discussion between community leaders and organizations, consider hosting a community forum with a cross-section of influencers. Develop open-ended questions about the areas of concern. For example: "How can we engage our children in community improvement?" or "What do you believe is the top issue concerning our youth?"



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DREAM BIG!

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

- If you could give your community anything, what would it be?
- What would that service project look like? Is this the "signature service project" in which your club is currently engaged?
- If "Yes!" can you make it even better?
- If "No," what steps can your club take now to make your new service project happen by this time next year? Take a look at the **Signature Project Toolkit** to help determine your next move.



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