



# A Resource Guide for Key Clubs with Less Than 20 Members

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## The Basics

While some Key Clubs may seem to prosper with less than 20 members, this low membership poses risks to club stability and raises questions about how the club will prosper and continue to accomplish the Key Club mission. It is the role of the Florida District of Key Club International Inc. to help your club maximize its potential and achieve success.

### **Club Leadership Quality and Succession**

If a Key Club is following its bylaws and giving members opportunities to serve in leadership roles (and thereby supporting Key Club's mission), the club should be electing at least nine officers to serve on the club's Board of Directors. These positions are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Bulletin Editor (or Historian or similar position), and one Class Director from each grade level. With less than 20 members, the pool of qualified members to fill these nine positions is extremely small. This places the club at risk for a less than optimal leadership team.

### **Membership Diversity and Club Strength**

Clubs with less than 20 members are usually lacking in several areas of diversity. Are there enough 9th through 11th graders to provide an adequate membership for the next year? Are there enough seniors to help teach and model the needed leadership skills and to pass on valuable traditions found in a successful club? Does the club's diversity in its members provide a rich source of ideas to fulfill the service and leadership mission of a Key Club and keep it from appearing like a clique? Remember that *inclusiveness* is one of Key Club's four core values. Are there enough members to plan and execute a significant number of meaningful and impactful service projects? Is the membership adequate enough so that most of next year's time and effort can be spent on serving the community instead of rebuilding the club? If any of these questions can be answered with a no then you may need to evaluate your club and create a plan on how to strengthen the membership of your club.

### **Consider the Facts**

Statistically speaking, most of the clubs that go inactive and lose their charters in the Florida District have possessed fewer than 20 members the previous year. The average club size in the Florida District is 58 members. Small schools do not necessarily mean small membership.

Between the ten largest and ten smallest clubs are 330 clubs with a wide range of school and club sizes. Rather than school size, a number of other factors seem to determine club size. These factors include the following:

- Leadership skills of the club leaders
- Club activity is perceived as adequate, fun, and satisfying to current and prospective members
- Effectiveness of adult advisors (Faculty and Kiwanis) in guiding the leadership
- Expectations for membership (educating new members about the expectations and enforcing them)
- Involvement of club leaders and members in Key Club on the division, district, and International levels
- Kiwanis involvement with the club
- Positive view of the club by the school administration

# Membership Recruitment

There is no secret formula to adding members to your club's roster. Membership growth is a challenge - it takes work, determination, creativity, and enthusiasm. But, most important, it takes a plan.

Although club members should always be on the lookout for students who would make good Key Clubbers, Key Club International recommends that your club has two membership drives during the Key Club year: one occurring at the beginning of your school year, the fall drive, and one occurring at the end of your school year, the spring drive. Having a membership drive in the spring, as well as in the fall, is very important in growing your club. Having a spring membership drive, will strengthen your club for the summer, allowing your club to complete service over the summer as well as having an enthusiastic membership base when school starts.

To ensure the success of your club's membership growth campaigns, review and implement the following guidelines based on your needs.

## ***How can you approach new members?***

Various methods can be used in approaching prospective members. Many clubs open their membership to all interested students, and invite interested students to attend an informational meeting through posters, intercom announcements, and displays at orientation meetings. Hanging posters and flyers in areas where students congregate is very important. To encourage students to come to a meeting, advertise free food or have a service project at the meeting. You cannot over-advertise a meeting. Make sure the word is out.

But sometimes membership is difficult to build at certain times through the year. To help spread the word about Key Club, plan and execute a service project or large fundraiser at your school. When you are advertising the event, advertise Key Club with it and encourage students to join the club. Once students see the fun in volunteering and bettering their community, students will likely join.

A social gathering might also provide a casual but entertaining evening for club prospects. Perhaps a swim party at the beginning of the school year for all members and new prospects could be held to get the word out about Key Club. Make the event fun, but informative.

Membership should remain open to all students. Some clubs set limits on the number of members allowed, but a club that establishes a membership quota not only denies prospective members the opportunity to serve, but limits the scope and amount of service the club can provide as well. The argument that a large membership is harder to work with and more difficult to monitor is refuted by the many clubs with more than 100 members which possess an active membership with a successful service record.

## ***Establish goals***

Anticipate your club's needs. Does your club participate in regularly scheduled projects that require a certain number of attendees for completion? Are there projects that your club has set aside due to a lack of membership?

Consider the history of your club's membership. Has your club experienced steady and sufficient growth? Have the members expanded their contribution to the school and community through your Key Club?

Establishing performance standards for individual members through the use of a point system can help prospective members (along with present members) realize the emphasis Key Club places on participation. Such standards would also allow the club to highlight the accomplishments of the club's "go-getters". A sample point system can be

found later on this document.

There is a growing demand for people to address the needs of the community. Key Club can help meet that demand by recruiting more high schoolers to join the premier service organization.

### ***Develop a prospect list***

Remember that caring and sincerity are characteristics to look for when you are recruiting new members. Look for students with a desire to serve and give back to their community. Do not forget to encourage freshmen and sophomore students to join Key Club, as they are the future of the organization in your school.

Get input from your principal, guidance counselors, teachers, and fellow club members about how to advertise Key Club to students who might be interested. They might know names of students interested in joining an organization like Key Club. Try to increase your membership with students from a variety of backgrounds to provide diversity to your club.

### ***Understanding why growth is vital***

Although more than one-fourth of Key Club International's total membership graduates annually, this is just one justification for a membership drive.

Growth produces new talent, brainpower, and manpower. Growth boosts the club toward greater and more significant service. Growth gives a club a greater ability to raise funds for charities and to complete community service.

### ***Suggestions for a successful membership drive***

- **Establish Goals.** Determine, as a club or as a board, the membership number you are striving to reach. Provide incentives for present members to bring new members.
- **Advertise.** Make sure that, regardless of the format your club chooses to recruit new members, the entire student body is aware of it. Posters, flyers, table tents in the lunchroom, e-mails, intercom announcements, school newsletters, bulletin boards, electronic bulletin boards, and personal contact should all be used to get the word out about an upcoming Key Club recruitment event.
- **Be organized.** Planning an informational membership event, regardless of whether or not it is a social or formal event, needs to be thorough and done well in advance. Involve your club officers and as many members as possible in the planning process. Establish a timetable. Arrange for the facilities, refreshments, and all outside assistance.
- **Get help from outside sources.** The club can contact the division's Lieutenant Governor for ideas on successfully recruiting new members. Perhaps a district officer would be available to speak at a general club meeting.
- **Arrange transportation.** This is probably the most overlooked aspect of in regards to membership participation. Underclassmen oftentimes do not have a ride to go to events after school. Assign upperclassmen to a transportation committee to provide transportation for those students who have difficulty making meetings and projects outside of school hours or present sign-ups for carpools before each off campus event.
- **Invite everyone to join Key Club!** After the informational aspects of your membership event are completed, present a membership application to each prospective member. Avoid high-pressure salesmanship, but make sure you do ask all prospective members to join Key Club. Follow up with all prospective members and, based on their responses, assess how successful/ effective your recruitment strategy was this time.

### **Suggested Letter of Invitation**

Key Club of \_\_\_\_\_ High School

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Key Club International is the world's largest high school service organization with a membership of nearly 245,000 members in 24 nations and geographic areas. Almost 5,000 high schools make Key Club part of their school.

Although primarily a service organization, Key Club strives to produce well-rounded students. Service to school and community, and the enrichment of personal ideals are the basic goals of this organization. However, athletics, social functions, banquets, conventions, and rallies are part of Key Club. The Motto, "CARING - OUR WAY OF LIFE," attest to the tradition and dedication to active service Key Club has maintained for more than 75 years.

Our Key Club is an excellent example of this organization. It is the most active club in the high school.

Each September and March, Key Club holds a membership drive and invites prospective members composed of the school's most outstanding, caring people. The school principal, school counselors, and club members recommended you.

With this short background, it is with great pleasure that I am inviting you to join the world's largest high school service organization. You are invited to the club's informational meeting on (date) at (time) in (room).

We hope to see you there!

Sincerely yours, President/ Committee Chairman/ Faculty Advisor

### **Sample agenda for meeting with prospective members**

- Call to Order - President
- Pledge - Member
- Introduction of Guests and General Welcome - Membership Chairperson
- A General Overview of Key Club – President
- Key Club's Relationship to Kiwanis - Kiwanis Advisor
- Key Club's Relationship to School - Faculty Advisor
- Experiences Unique to Key Club - Member
- Service Projects Performed in The Past - Member
- Structure of Key Club International - District or Club Officer
- District and International Conventions - Member (who has attended)
- What Key Club Means to Me - Member
- Video/PowerPoint: Utilize the Major Emphasis Program CD, On-line Video Magazine, the Florida District of Key Club Youtube page, or create your own slideshow with photos and footage of club service projects.
- Adjournment for refreshments
- Invitation for prospective members to join or come back for additional education on the Key Club program and induction into the club.
- Final Adjournment

**Membership Form**

Applications should be printed and passed out at the end of the first informational meeting to all prospective members. Many different types of applications can be used depending on what information you want to know about your prospective members.

**Sample Membership Form**

Key Club Of Home Town High School:

Name:

Address:

Grade:

Phone:

Place of Employment (if applicable):

In answering the following questions in regards to your time constraints, inspiration, and motivation to join this club

1. What are your interests?
2. What organizations do you now belong to or have you belonged to? List any offices held.
3. List any honors or special achievements you have received, explain:
4. What extracurricular activities do you participate in?
5. Why do you want to join Key Club and what can you contribute if you do join?
6. Do you have or would you need transportation to projects or meetings?
7. It is our aim to get to know you as well as possible through this application.
8. With this in mind, please list any concerns, experiences, or anything else you would want us to know.

(Applicant's signature)

**Sample agreement**

Key Club membership agreement (hand in, signed, with dues. Required Dues=\$11.50 + T-shirt=\$8.50=\$20). Your money will only be accepted with this signed form.

T-shirt size (circle one): S M L XL (Add \$3) TOTAL=\$\_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

Since many community organizations have come to rely on and trust Key Club's consistent service record, each member must make a commitment to that service to remain a member. Please sign the understanding and commitment below:

I understand that I/my child must perform 4 hours of verified Key Club service per 9 weeks. After an additional 9 weeks' probation, if these service hours are not completed, I also understand that my/my child's membership and dues will be forfeited for the year. I will have another opportunity to join the following school year.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail or phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Keys to Success**

**1) Hold many service projects of a large variety:**

- A. Be sure to start off the year with a multitude of service projects. Your new

members must understand that they are a part of a club of high standards in service.

B. Partner up with other organizations to help you with your projects. Do not forget that your Kiwanis Club can also be a great support system.

For tips on how to plan the best events, read this:

<http://floridakeyclub.org/dlid=190>

## **2) Get involved with Major Emphasis and The Eliminate Project:**

A. Key Club has several Major Emphasis projects that partner with select organizations and charities in order to impact the lives of children.

B. The Eliminate Project is an international initiative created by Kiwanis International and UNICEF to combat maternal and neonatal tetanus, a disease which kills one baby every nine minutes! Key Club has made it one of its primary objectives to fundraise for The Eliminate Project through 2015. For more information on this campaign, and how your club can contribute, go to <http://www.theeliminateproject.org>.

## **3) Get your club involved within your division:**

A. Your Key Club is a part of the Mighty, Mighty Florida District, the oldest and second- largest district in ALL of Key Club International!

B. Every month, your Lieutenant Governor should be sending you newsletters with updated and essential information that you can send out to members. Also, they should be holding Divisional Council Meetings (DCMs) that discuss all of the happenings in the District, your division, and International. These meetings are fun, service-filled, and a perfect way for your members to acquaint themselves with Key Club at higher levels!

4) Have members attend KCKC, SZR, DCON and ICON:

a. Along with DCMs, these district-level events prove how far your club has come with member involvement and are vital to expanding your members' views of Key Club!

b. KCKC is the Key Club Kick-Off Conference, and it is held within your zone at the beginning of the school year to introduce new members to Key Club and provide officer training. Spring Zone Rally takes place after Winter Break and is yet another opportunity for officer training, as well as an opportunity to elect new divisional officers and listen to candidates running for Executive or International Office.

c. District Education and Leadership Conference (DCON) and International Convention (ICON) are the two most groundbreaking events you would want to attend, as it is at these events that the Florida District and Key Club International show off all of their glory. It is at these events that the District and International Board members are elected, and a new Key Club year is begun!