



## LOCAL ACTION GUIDE

# Membership Growth

The Mission tells us that the Jaycees exists to provide opportunities that empower young people to create positive change. The impact we can create in the world is limited only by the number of young active citizens who participate in this organization. JCI Local Chapters must therefore continue to share JCI with young active citizens so they can take advantage of the opportunities to empower themselves to create positive change in their communities.

Successful Local Chapters have a clear strategy for the attraction, orientation and retention of new members. A Local Chapter needs to continually bring in new members for fresh ideas, to fill the positions of those who move on to higher offices and to replace those who left due to age limits or to assume leadership positions in the community.



## TAKING THE LEAD ON GROWTH

Inviting new young people to JCI is the responsibility of every JCI member. Leadership of specific growth activities and the recruitment plan falls under the responsibility of the Vice President(s) for External Affairs, who are most in touch with external stakeholders. The future of JCI lies in the community. You must look outside the organization to find people who can bring new talents, connections and ideas. The committees under the Vice President(s) for External Affairs have a direct line into the community and know what could make JCI more attractive to young people and where to find ideal potential members.

## BUILDING AN ATTRACTIVE ORGANIZATION

To put your organization in the best position for growth, take a close look at your Local Chapter. A positive image, a high community profile and unique activities will naturally attract the interest of young people. Engage current members in exciting, meaningful activities that are visible to the community. Build curiosity about JCI. Young active citizens want to be part of a group that is well known and respected for creating positive change in their community.

Build a positive reputation in your community by living and acting through the JCI Mission. Actions speak louder than words; show people what JCI is through concrete projects that create measurable positive change and get to the root of community problems. The bigger impact you create, the more people will notice. See the JCI Active Citizen Framework and the Local Plan of Action/Local Project Plan of Action Guides to get more information on how to run impactful projects that attract young people.

## THE IDEAL MEMBER

Attracting new members is not just about quantity, it's about motivation. Those new members who want to join for the right reasons and want to contribute to the long-term success of JCI are the foundation of a strong future. Those who join only to receive a certain benefit will not be members for long. When looking for members, consider these aspects:

- 1. Is energized by the Mission and purpose**  
Look for young people who demonstrate passion for the ideas in the JCI Mission and for making a difference. Those who are energized by the idea of creating positive change and being part of something bigger than themselves will be motivated to participate in JCI initiatives.
- 2. Wants to grow and expand their horizons**  
Look for young people who are constantly seeking new experiences, new knowledge and personal improvement. Those with an open mind will be able to embrace the challenges of managing complex projects and work well as a team with other members.
- 3. Is active in the community**  
Look for young people who are active in other organizations such as volunteers for community service. Those who are tuned in with current events in their local area will be ready to take action on community issues. Also look for individuals that have the time and resources to be an active member and are interested in taking a leadership role.
- 4. Is somewhat younger than the average age of current members**  
New members should ideally be younger than the average current members, but avoid a large generation gap so that new members can easily integrate. If the current average age is too high, work on bringing it down little by little.

## THE RECRUITMENT PLAN

### Recruitment Message

Be ready to share your passion for the Jaycees in a meaningful way to potential members. Emphasize the Mission and the solutions that your Local Organization has created to showcase your accomplishments.

Consider the factors that set your Local Chapter apart from other organizations. Sometimes it's not just the activities that are different, but the Mission, the JCI experience and the JCI worldview. JCI helps young people find their own power to improve the world, positively impact the lives of others, become part of a global network and find personal purpose.

### Setting Expectations

Let potential members know that Jaycees is not just about what you get, it is about what you give. Set the expectation that being a member of JCI takes dedication and work. Follow these messages with personal stories of the benefits your members feel they receive as a result of their dedication to JCI. Ensure that the message is not misleading and reflects the realities of the organization.

### Setting Realistic Goals

Decide how many members can be incorporated in the current structure and how many can go through the orientation process at one time. Consider how long it takes a new member to become fully integrated. While setting a goal is important, don't get overly concerned about the numbers. Gaining a few dedicated active members is more important than recruiting an army of people who aren't going to meaningfully contribute.

### Events

For some organizations, it may be effective to host an open house event where young people can come to learn about your Local Chapter in a relaxed setting. You may choose to offer food, activities or combine it with an existing project to make it attractive. Be sure *not* to overtly call it a recruitment event, as attendees may feel pressured to make a decision. Understand that everyone who attends might not join. Be courteous, friendly and welcoming anyway.

### Personal Referrals and Contacts

All active members should be involved in a variety of community activities and events. This is a good way to get to know other young people who might be looking for a place like JCI to get more involved. Participate in fairs and networking events where people can feel comfortable getting to know existing members, which will make them more comfortable attending a JCI meeting or event when invited.

### Transition to Membership

Once a young person decides to join, the responsibility of membership retention and involvement shifts to the VP over membership, or other appropriate person or committee. After all the efforts to bring in these new members, make sure to work closely with the membership management committee to fulfill their needs and expectations.

## THE INDUCTION CEREMONY

When a number of new members have joined the organization, it's time to hold a ceremony to officially induct them. The decision to become a member of JCI is one that should be taken seriously. Taking an oath of membership means that you are committed to the Mission, Vision and Values of the US Junior Chamber. Members are guided by this oath throughout their involvement. This event should be conducted as a solemn and memorable moment in the new member's experience.

Invite all existing members, local, regional and national officers to attend. The Local President, a visiting National Officer or International Officer usually administers the oath. He or she begins by asking the new members to raise their right hand and repeat:

Oath:

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully serve as a member of (name of the Local Chapter) and will, to the best of my ability, serve as a living example of this organization's philosophy and beliefs and will uphold and enforce the Constitution of the Local Chapter, the National Organization and JCI at all times."

After the oath, a JCI pin is offered to the new member along with the welcome letter, Local Chapter Constitution and the JCI Mission, Vision and Values (Creed). The JCI membership welcome kit is part of the JCI Local Organization toolkit and can be downloaded at [www.jci.cc](http://www.jci.cc).

### New Member Involvement

New members are eager to jump in to their JCI experience. They have much to learn about your Local Organization, so set up an orientation to make them knowledgeable about what is ahead on their JCI journey. Immediately involve them in a new or existing project so they feel like an integral part of the organization. Give new members special attention to ensure that they feel welcome and involved. Tend to their questions and concerns and show your excitement for the new ideas they bring to your projects and events.