



Guide to Launching a New Chapter

We are an organization dedicated to empowering young people to create positive change in communities throughout the country. The more chapters we have, the more impact we make.

Based on successful chapter growth experiences in other JCI countries and in cities across America, we have developed this guide to aid members in launching healthy new chapters.

Target Audience

Although anyone aged 18 – 40 is eligible to join, not everyone in that age range is equipped with the skills, knowledge and passion to make an impact with the Chapter. In new members, US Jaycees seeks active citizens who take an interest in the wellbeing of their communities and demonstrate a commitment to tackling problems and providing sustainable solutions. The ideal member will be young, energetic, ambitious, open minded, willing to explore new ideas and sociable.

With membership age limited to 18 – 40, bringing in young members to commit several years to building effective projects will be essential to also building sustainable Chapters. While no median age will be appropriate for every Chapter or community, focusing on the age range of 25 – 32 as our target audience will provide great flexibility while ensuring a minimum of eight years as a member. Additionally, individuals at this age are settling down, unburdened with extensive family obligations and open-minded about new opportunities to make an impact. Finding these individuals and bringing them to JCI USA requires action outlined into five steps below.

Five Action Step Plan

1. Identify Target Locations

Identify communities where at least one Local Chapter existed in the past 3-10 years. Identify communities with sufficient population in the target age range to support and sustain an effective Local Chapter. Identify communities where there has never been a JCI USA chapter. Identify communities with a healthy chapter within 30 miles.

Once a location is identified, schedule a meeting with the Mayor or chief elected official.

Identify Community Stakeholders

Meet with the Mayor or chief elected official. There is no substitute. Meetings with Chamber officials, school superintendents and community college administrators are helpful but there is no substitute for the clout of the Mayor's office. Meet with the Mayor or a close counterpart. At this meeting, your objectives are:

1. Get the Mayor to back the launch of a Jaycee chapter in the community.
2. Get the Mayor to identify 2-3 simple projects the chapter can sink its teeth into. One should be fairly easy to complete (4-6 weeks) as all chapters benefit from a quick and early success story.
3. Get the Mayor to identify 5 key promoters to aid you in identifying potential chapter members. These five should have passion and skills to drive the success of the Local Chapter. They will be the foundation on which the future of the Chapter will rest. The Mayor ideally will select a diverse group of individuals with a broad range of varied skills will ensure that the Local Chapter will be equipped to handle any adversity they face in their mission to create positive change. From insurance agents, bankers and financial advisors to educators, marketers and even funeral directors, everybody brings something different that can help a Local Chapter succeed.

Meeting with the Five Key Promoters

Meet with the Mayor's five key promoters. Your objectives as you meet with each of the five are to:

1. Emphasize their role as agents of change and stress their importance to the success of the Local Chapter. Empowering these Key Promoters with this responsibility will invest them building their chapter and inspire them to advance our mission by launching and growing the Chapter. Explain the Jaycees and who we are, what we do, and what we can do for the community.
2. Have each commit to bringing 5 or more of-age young people to a community meeting (that you will schedule) where the Jaycee chapter will be launched and the group will make beginning plans to accomplish one of the Mayor's projects. Going "five for five" – bringing five individuals for each original member – will rapidly expand the Chapter and its ability to affect change.

Your job between the time you meet with the key promoters and the time of the community meeting is to:

- a. Keep the Mayor updated on the projects of the 5 key promoters
- b. Keep reminding the key promoters to invite and bring 5+ of-age people to your community meeting.

We will provide them with the necessary resources and tools to begin their own local Chapter. This includes free website, the Local Chapter tool kits, print material (where applicable) and facilitating the affiliation process.

Start the Local Chapter at this Community Meeting

With strong, committed leaders and a passionate group of members, you're ready to establish goals surrounding the needs you discovered in the first step. Decide on the first need the Chapter will address and commit the next five meetings to focusing on the creation of a sustainable solution to the problem and the actions needed to achieve the established goals. Set expectations for the impact the Chapter can achieve and make sure you hold the leadership accountable for taking the action to which they committed themselves. Foster the development of the new Local Chapter by providing it with the necessary resources, tools and contacts to help it reach its goals and strive for even greater change in the future. Follow up regularly to ensure the Chapter is thriving and to discover, address and cure issues quickly.

Communications:

Throughout the five step process, keep the focus on the JCI USA Mission – engaging young people to create impact. While benefits and opportunities are necessary to engage young people, these aspects of membership should be regarded as secondary to the accomplishment of the Mission. Motivating and inspiring young people to take action and find sustainable solutions to community challenges will be the key driver behind the communications strategy.

Achieving membership growth will not result from a continuous drumbeat about needing new membership. By providing relevant, needs-based action and solutions to common problems, Local Chapters will not only attract those assisted directly by the project but those interested in belonging to an Chapter known for taking action. Keep your Chapter at the front of other's minds and constantly engage the young people in your community by communicating your commitment to achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals through the JCI Active Citizen Framework.

Contact the National office at info@jciusa.org for additional guidance and explanation on launching new and sustainable JCI USA chapters.