



Supporting Inclusive Communities



MODULE 8: MAKING MEMBERSHIP ACCESSIBLE

A Community League’s most valuable asset is you, it’s League Members. Membership grows the capacity of the League and allows the League to run programs and services that support the creation of a cohesive community. The current membership of a Community League should be reflective of the present diversity and needs of the community; therefore, getting underrepresented residents membership is essential to ensuring that everyone has a voice.

The last couple of weeks, we’ve explored ways to make the Community League Movement more inclusive to the diverse identities of the residents that live in our neighbourhoods. This week, we’re taking those learnings and applying them to memberships.

But first, let’s reflect on how you currently feel about your League’s membership. The next page includes questions and activities that were designed to help you reflect on areas of strength and growth when it comes to your Community League’s membership.



The image on the right highlights some of the events and activities Leagues have run since March. The most common events appear the largest. If your League ran programming during this time, consider how your board decided what programs to run?

Without a clear sense of what Community League Members need, running effective and responsive programming wouldn't be possible. But if folks struggling in our communities don't have a membership to begin with it is hard for our Leagues to connect with them and provide support.

REFLECTING ON CURRENT MEMBERSHIP TRENDS

Reflection Question One:

- Are you currently happy with membership sales in your Community League?
 - Consider why you answered the way that you did. What changes, if applicable, to your League's membership you would like to see?

Reflection Question Two:

- What are the methods (i.e., online, door-to-door) your League uses to promote membership of the Community League? List below.

Are you happy with the results from using this methods? Yes or No

Activity Find the neighbourhood that matches with your Community League on the [2016 City of Edmonton Census](#). Consider the current membership in your League (if you're able to pull up this information even better. If not consider who's coming out to your events). Does the current membership match the demographics listed in the census?

- If yes, consider what outreach activities your League is currently doing as they are probably working.
- If no, consider why this is the case.

Optional Activity:

- If you have access to the addresses of your Community League Members consider plotting them on google map ([here's a video showing how to do this](#), note addresses must be entered into a Google or Excel spreadsheet prior). This will give you a clearer picture of areas in your neighbourhood that are high in membership and locations in your neighbourhood that need further promotion.

IDEAS TO REACH UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

How we promote membership has an impact on whether current or potential Community League Members see the Community League as an inclusive place. Below we highlight some ideas and activities, that we've heard other Leagues using, for your League to consider when it comes to improving the outreach of membership to underrepresented neighbours.



Tiered Membership:

The different membership categories your League provides should be reflective of the diverse families found in your neighbourhood. For example, if your League only offers a family tier of membership, you may be unintentionally excluding single folks in your communities. Use data to inform your board's decisions. For example, if you saw in the [2016 City of Edmonton Census](#) that your neighbourhood had a high population of seniors, consider creating a senior category to appeal to this demographic in your community.

Make it clear the value of holding a CL Membership:

As we mentioned in our [previous module on diversity](#), the League Movement is unique to Edmonton so it's important that Leagues be able to communicate the value of having a membership. One idea that was worked well for some Leagues was creating pamphlets that highlight the benefits of being a League member to hand out to neighbours. Another idea is to sit down and price out how much savings a person is getting by being a Community League Member. Think about how effective coupon books are as fundraisers. Being able to tell your Community Members that "100 dollars in membership gets you X amount in savings" is a great way to hook people in. In addition, share with League Members where their membership fees are going. Whether it's programming, operations or somewhere else, this will help them see that buying a membership is helping to create and build community.



IDEAS TO REACH UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Where are you promoting membership?

As we explored in our [previous module on board diversity](#), where and when you promote League opportunities and events can have a huge impact in reaching underrepresented voices in your League membership. For example, if your community has a huge population from a certain ethnicity that is underrepresented in League memberships, consider partnering with local restaurants or businesses owned by folks of those ethnicities. Other ideas to promote membership include:

- On your Community's Next Door App (if they have one)
- On Social Media (find the pages and spaces where your League Members are and promote here.
- Door-to-door
 - Partner with local high schools or youth groups in the neighbourhood to support this. One League told us that they hire local kids/youth to pass out their flyers door-to-door a couple of times a year.
 - NOTE: Be strategic. We know many of you don't have the capacity to do your whole communities all at once. Using information like data from the google maps activity to inform where you start or just choosing a couple of streets to do at various times throughout the year can make a huge difference.
- Consider turning membership drives into a fun event.
 - One League did a drive-by membership drive where they gave out free single-serve ice cream cups with every purchased membership.
 - Another League did a pop-up membership drive where they set up membership tables throughout the community so people could walk down their block to buy membership.
 - Some Leagues sell memberships for half an hour every month before board meetings, and others offer free membership to anyone who comes to their AGMs.



Note: For Leagues that have online membership set up, you could create posters with QR codes ([here's a video tutorial](#) and [link to a free QR generator](#)) advertising your League membership to put in local businesses. You can have the QR codes set to direct folks to your online membership sales page. Posters can also be translated into different languages, which would help membership sales be more accessible.

WHAT DO YOU DO ONCE A NEIGHBOUR SIGNS UP?

Selling memberships is only the beginning of your relationship with that League Member. It is important to follow-up, especially if the League Member indicates they are interested in volunteering. If your League never follows up, your League Member will lose interest and not be motivated to help out.

When selling memberships consider what demographic information you are collecting, names, emails and addresses are important. Another question that may be handy to ask depending on the demographic of your community is language preferences. One way of wording this question would be "Our League strives to be as inclusive as possible with our communications, please indicate your preferred language to receive communication in. We will try our best to accommodate."

***Did you know your League could partner with post-secondary programs to get a student volunteer to support the translation of your League's services and resources. Contact us at leaguesupport@efcl.org for more information.

The easiest way to follow-up is by sending out a follow-up email. Your League can create an email template to email that you use to email out new members which will make this process easier.

If you get members to fill out a google form while signing up for membership, then you can easily copy email addresses and sending a mass email after the membership drive or League event. If your League uses Gmail, here's [a handy link](#) on creating an email mailing list which will make it easy to email out volunteers.

Ultimately, if your League wants to improve its membership, your League needs to put the time and effort in to building relationships with the people and businesses that coexist in your community. . The time and effort you put in now will pay off because every new member increases the capacity of the League to do great things in the community.

