

2012 FOCL Membership Survey Results

This summer, FOCL surveyed Friends groups in Connecticut about membership. Forty-seven groups responded.

Results show that total membership has remained the same over the last couple of years for about 2/3 of the reporting groups. For the remaining groups, membership went up for about half and down for the other half. Although membership remained the same for most groups, only 22% were satisfied with their membership totals.

The groups were split in the focus of their recruiting efforts. Half were interested in recruiting members only while the other half were also looking for board members and officers.

A look at membership across all the responses with the numbers are broken down town population served, membership as percentage of population and the lowest and high number of members for each population served.

Population served	Average membership as % of population served	Lowest and highest membership in number of people
Small (up to 5,000)	2.4%	10 – 450
Medium (5,000 – 25,000)	0.8%	20 – 150
Large (over 25,000)	1.3%	100 - 900

The most popular way of recruiting member is asking individuals to join along with providing a brochure describing their Friends group. The next most popular method is using a web page or an e-mail blast. The jury is out on how much social media helps with recruiting. The groups using Facebook said it is too early to tell.

Examining the responses from the 22% of the groups that said that they were satisfied with membership produced some interesting results. The groups ranged from populations of 4,000 to 25,000. All groups either kept or increased their membership.

Characteristics of these groups include:

- A membership of about 2% of the population served
- A full-time membership committee for 95% of the groups

Approaches in recruiting used by these groups include:

- Providing tasks that potential new members could get involved in and which were available 100% of the time
- Recruiting in the larger community beyond the library by sending townwide mailings, recruiting at Friend-sponsored events or distributing literature at community events
- Heavy use of social media -- i.e. Facebook, e-mail, web sites -- to recruit

Looking at the groups who said that they were not satisfied with membership produced results that somewhat differed. Groups in this category ranged from areas with populations served of 1,600 to 80,000. Most memberships stayed the same or went down with two exceptions.

Characteristics of the non-satisfied groups include:

- A membership of about 1% or less of the population served
- A membership committee in only 50% of the groups.

Approaches to recruiting used by these groups include:

- Providing tasks that potential new members could get involved in were available 50% of the time
- Recruiting in a larger community beyond the library only 25% of the time
- Using social media to recruit 25% of the time