

Key to College Manual

What is a Key to College?

Key to College is a Kiwanis Family Program developed for high school students who are interested in pursuing higher education and gaining insight about college/university life. Typically, the Key to College Program includes workshops on topics ranging from the Application Process to Time Management in College and to Busting Myths and Misconceptions. In addition, Key to College Chairs have the option of including other aspects into their program such as Guided Campus Tours, Panels, and Small-Group Discussions.

While it can be opened to general high school students, the target audience of Key to College is local Key Clubs and KIWIN'S clubs . By hosting a Key to College, Circle K is given the opportunity to serve as mentors to a younger branch of our organization. Hosting a Key to College truly provides Circle K with a unique opportunity to establish and strengthen their Kiwanis Family Relations.

The possibilities are endless when planning a Key to College, and this guide aims to assist you in creating the best program to suit your club's needs.



Why You Should Host a Key to College

Hosting a Key to College Program benefits both the high school audience and your CKI club in several ways:

1. High school students have the opportunity to learn about college life first-hand from college students. In addition to learning how to select and apply for their ideal colleges, high school students will learn all about living on campus, selecting courses, applying for financial aid, joining student organizations, choosing a major, and adapting to campus social life and schoolwork.
2. The Key to College Program gives members of CKI the opportunity to interact with high school students, often members of Key Club International. While the program is not limited to Key Club audiences by any means, CKI groups may wish to target Key Club members so that they may begin to develop a relationship that will enhance both organizations' service potentials in the future.
3. CKI members may further develop their leadership and presentation skills by providing this needed community service.



Steps to Planning a Key to College



A Club Hosting Key to College for the First Time

Planning a Key to College is no easy task. It requires months of planning to be able to pull off such a large scale event depending on what you are envisioning. While this may sound intimidating, in the end it is a worthwhile event that truly provides assistance to high school students. If you are planning a Key to College for the first time there are a few basic steps to follow to ensure that you have an effective program.

When and How Should One Plan a Key to College?

Make sure you start planning Key to College well in advance before the actual event. The scope of your program determines how much time you should allocate to planning it; however, we suggest beginning the planning process at least two months before your expected date.

When you start planning for the event, there are many things you should take into consideration. Below is a list of things that you need to make sure are addressed:

1. **Date and Time:** When are you planning to host the event? In order to have an effective Key to College, you need to decide when is the best time to have it. You should be conscientious of your attendees' calendars.

Avoid dates that conflict with school events (dances, finals, etc.), Key Club Events (conventions, conferences, etc.) and standardized test dates (SATs and ACTs). Know that there may not be a perfect date, but you want to choose the least conflicting day.

2a. **Location and Structure:**

Oftentimes, clubs host Key to College on their campuses. Once you have a date in mind, your next step should be to book rooms for your event. How many workshops are happening at the same time? The size and number of rooms you book depend on what you envision for your program, so plan a workshop matrix before booking rooms.

- 2b. The structure of Key to College matrixes vary depending on how many workshops hosts are available and if the topics are deemed vital to all attendees. Workshops can be repeated throughout the event, multiple rooms can be used, or it can be simplified to one workshop per session. Below are three different examples of workshop matrixes with each letter signifying a different workshop.

1)

A
B
C
D

2)

A			
B		C	
D			
E	F	G	H

3)

A	B	C
D		
A	B	E
F		

3. **Budget:** How much will the event cost? Once your club decides that it is willing to host a Key to College, it must assess the financial cost of hosting the event. Things to keep in mind when creating the budget include:
- Cost of Booking the Room(s)
 - Cost of Feeding the Attendees
 - Charging a small fee to minimize the cost can be considered if the the budget cannot provide for enough food.
 - Cost of Printing (Programs, Workshop Literature, Evaluations, Etc.)
 - Miscellaneous Items (Service Project Materials, Souvenirs, Etc.)
 - Donations



How Does a Club Receive Approval to Host a Key to College?

Below is an excerpt from the Event Request Form (ERF) Policy, Paragraph D(5):

“ If a Circle K club hosts a “Key to College” or other similar event designed to provide members of both Key Club Districts with an educational program in preparation for college, the event is limited to daylight hours, and the invited Key Clubs and KIWIN'S clubs are within thirty-five (35) miles of the event location, the event shall not require advance approval from Regional Advisors or District Administrators. However, the Circle K club shall advise the applicable Regional Advisors by email at least one week before invitations are extended to the Key Clubs and KIWIN'S clubs, and any Key Club or KIWIN'S club that attends shall be required to comply with paragraphs D(3) and D(4). (03/10) ”

When planning your Key to College, you must do so in accordance to the ERF Policy. At least one week before you plan to begin advertising, the appropriate advisors must be notified. This notice comes in the form of an ERF as well as any other supplemental information that the advisors must know or request. Like with all events involving Key Club and KIWIN'S, all schools must have permission to be in attendance at your event. Be sure to send out a completed copy of the ERF to all the clubs you invited through their division, notifying them that they must submit the necessary waivers and consent forms on-site with the appropriate signatures completed. Without the proper permissions, a high school student cannot participate at your Key to College, and you must turn them away.

Please remember that Kiwanis Policy is still in effect during Key to College, so you still need to ensure that you take the proper precautions that you would with all other events involving Key Club.

4. **Audience:** Who do you plan to invite to the event? Your next step should be deciding which Key Club members will be invited to your event. Only clubs within a 35-mile radius of the event location are allowed to be invited, so plan accordingly. When you decide which divisions you want to invite, you need to acquire the appropriate approvals from regional advisors.

5. **Transportation and Chaperone:** How will attendees get to your event, and who will be the approved chaperones? Once you have approval, it is your duty to ensure the safety of your attendees. Work with the Key Club Advisors to make sure that members are getting to your event safely with the appropriate chaperones, dropped off by parents, or transported by a chartered bus. In addition, you need to make sure that there are enough approved chaperones for the event. In accordance with policy, one adult chaperone must be present for every twelve Key Club attendees. Circle K members may not act as chaperones. It's strongly suggested to invite local Kiwanis Clubs to serve as chaperones

6. **Safety, Waivers, and Consent Forms:** How will you protect yourself and your attendees? Once everything is planned, do not forget that you need to have approved waivers and consent forms for the event. Remember that Key to College puts you and your members in close proximity with minors, so it is your and your club's duty to ensure that a culture of safety is implemented in which everyone feels comfortable with their surroundings. Often times, waivers will include attendance approval by a guardian's signature, medical treatment consent in case of an emergency, and a photography release if you will be having a club officer taking pictures. Before the event, ensure that all of your volunteers are trained in safe and appropriate behavior.

Although extensive, this is just a short list of the things that you need to address when planning your event. There are many other things to keep in consideration depending on what your club wants to do.

What Should My Program Include?

All Key to College Programs include workshops. It is to your discretion to decide the topics of these workshops. You can balance informative workshops with fun workshops, but remember to keep everything relevant to high school students trying to learn more about college.

In addition to workshops, your program can include campus tours, panels, and small group discussions. To be more effective, ask for some feedback from other members and your attendees on what they want to see in the program. In the end, the contents of the program is completely up to you, and as long as you have a solid matrix that balances everything out, your event will be a success!

How Do I Advertise to Key Club?

Some ways to advertise to Key Club members include:

- Implementing a cohesive theme for your event that is incorporated into your advertisement
- Creating a Social Media Campaign through a Private Facebook Event Page and/or Profile Picture Overlays to Generate Interest in the Event
- Give frequent reminders and updates to the attendees about the event by creating fliers, sending out emails, posting on Facebook group pages, etc.
- Ask Key Club Lieutenant Governors if they would be willing to have their monthly DCMs after Key to College or during a lunch break to increase overall attendance.
- Asking assistance from Key Club Lieutenant Governors and Region Advisors in advertising the event at meetings
- Acquiring testimonials from previous attendees to show the true impact of your event
- Offer Incentives and opportunity drawings to get more attendees

Remember that you represent Circle K with all your advertising material, so keep things appropriate and in good taste.

Key to College is a large event so it requires many volunteers. Try to talk to your Vice President of Service and/or Service Chairs to make sure that there is no other large service event planned on that day because you will need as many volunteers as you can get.

There are many volunteer opportunities for your members during Key to College, including working registration, hosting a workshop, and serving food. Know what you need for the event, and advertise to members early on that volunteers are needed. Circle K members differ on what they want to do when volunteering, so play off of everybody's strengths and show that there is a job for them at Key to College. If possible, set separate deadlines for particular specific opportunities which must be filled (i.e workshop host) to garner a more accurate read of your set of volunteers for the event.



How Do I Get Volunteers?

Although planning for your club's first ever Key to College seems difficult, it can be a rewarding and effective program if you follow these basic guidelines and give it your best shot. There are many people who can give you advice on how to plan the perfect event, including fellow board members, advisors, and other clubs around you that may have already planned a similar program. Remember that this is the first time your club is hosting it, so there is still time for your event to grow. As long as you build a foundation for the future, this program can thrive in your club. Good luck!

A Clubs That Regularly Hosts a Key to College

Perhaps you have already established and hosted a successful Key to College. However, there are always different methods to improve upon your Key to College event! Here are some ways to expand on what you may already know about Key to College!

1. Plan Key to College Early

It never hurts to start early! That's why the District Kiwanis Family and Foundation Committee recommends preparing volunteers, workshops, as well as miscellaneous event details early. This way, the planners will know very early on about how many attendees will be present at the event, how many rooms to reserve, how many rooms to reserve and how much food to prepare. If you want to incorporate more to your event, you have to plan earlier than before!

2. Read College Essay Samples

Some high school students may not know how to answer personal insight questions or they might not know what topics to write about for supplemental essays. Since some universities require personal essays for admission, it would be helpful to host a workshop for students to see what types of essays

helped CKI members gain admission into different colleges. Having dedicated volunteers for reviewing students' personal statements would also be highly beneficial as an alternative to a workshop. Hopefully this can alleviate the concerns high school students may have!

3. Provide personal insight question workshop

After reading over different approaches to the personal insight questions, it might be helpful to sit down with the students to help them bounce ideas for their own responses. Moreover, if the high school students are prepared, this supplemental workshop could also help edit papers for grammatical mistakes. Incorporating students from other schools within your area or division can be a great way to get different opinions and experiences about college. This is also a great opportunity to organize an interclub event and meet new people from your division!

4. Professionalism Workshop or Career Fair during Key to College

Since high school students will eventually need to worry about finding internships or volunteer experiences, it might be smart to start early on. For that reason, Key to College can include a workshop about finding internships/volunteer opportunities. Additionally, Key to College hosts could also bring in local internship representatives to speak about what type of person they might hire.

5. Joint Key to College events

For small colleges that might not have many high school attendees, it might be smart to join forces with local schools to host Key to College. Additionally, community colleges can focus exclusively on transfer students and pair up with different universities and community colleges to provide insight on the transfer process. The more higher education backgrounds you have at your program, the more rich and diverse the information you present becomes.

6. Real Talk

Many high school students wish to know the realities of college, rather than the misconceptions presented by high school movies. Therefore, it might be useful to offer a “real talk” workshop where high school students can ask about topics concerning: why individual students picked their college, whether they found friends and what clubs they recommend new students to join among other questions that might not be answered by admission staff. In addition, “real talk” can be done at small groups discussions that you can generate during free time.

7. Mix Up the Event Program

If a club’s Key to College has had a very similar structure for while, a fun way to reinvigorate some new life into the Key to College program is to mix around the event format through changing orders for workshops, panels, and other activities. It may seem like a small logistical change, but new changes can help create a different experience for the high school students that have attended more than once and the Circle K members who volunteer.

8. Integrating a Team Element
Fellowship activities are always a simple way to help lighten the mood and keep attendees engaged, but what about integrating a fellowship-oriented team element in a Key to College program? For example, Key to College attendees could be split up into different teams led by Circle K members that are named after the theme of the event for icebreakers and going around workshops, a time block could be dedicated to fellowship activities in the middle of the event, and much more. Through fellowship activities, high school students will have a more fun Key to College experience that will keep them engaged while they learn about the college experience.

9. Diversify Workshop Topics
For Key to College there are workshop topics that are common for high school students to learn about, but expanding on extra workshop topics can create a more well-rounded program for both college readiness and general advice. For example, high school students could attend workshops for healthy eating in college, budgeting your finances,

and even a dance workshop for fun. Think about skills that can be passed on to high school students that they will need in college as a basis for expanding your workshop topics, and attendees can learn more than they expect to.

10. Hosting A Service Project
If a Key to College program does not already include a service project, small tabletop projects are a great way to connect high school students and Circle K members during the event. Service projects also provide a simple way to give a break from educational topics that may reduce the attention of the attendees. Some examples that could be done for service projects include bookmark making, letters to soldiers, sock decorating, and more.



Key to College Programs always have room for improvement. By building off of the foundation given to you from the year before, you can ensure that your event improves with every year that it is hosted. Look around at other Key to College Programs for inspiration, and share your ideas with your fellow Key to College Chairs!

Alternative College Assistance Options



Hosting a formal Key to College is not the only way that Circle K can assist Key Club in becoming better prepared for the application process and college in general. Here are some alternative college-assistance programs that you can implement if a full-scale Key to College is just not feasible.

1. College Program at Key Club Meetings

If you cannot bring the high school students to college, you should try bringing the college students to high school. Talk to local Key Club Advisors and see if you can bring a few Circle K members to either a club meeting or a Divisional Council Meeting to host a college assistance program. Once granted the proper permissions, you can prepare a short presentation on tips regarding the college application process and general information on college life. Remember to include time afterwards for questions as high school students will probably relish the opportunity to get insider information from actual college students. You will probably be limited in time to how much you can present, so remember to only provide the necessary information!

2. Interaction at Kiwanis Family Events

Throughout your journey in Circle K, there is a good chance that you will encounter Key Club members at different Kiwanis Family Events. You can use these opportunities to serve as role models for this younger branch of the Kiwanis Family. A formal college assistance program is not the only opportunity to provide Key Club with valuable insight. A single conversation with a college student can definitely make a difference for a high school student preparing to embark on their next journey in life. If you are planning an event with Key Club, be sure to mix up the groups so that they contain members from both branches. If you are just attending the event, encourage your fellow members to strike up conversations with the Key Club members.

There are definitely many ways you can help Key Club members with their journey to college outside of a formal Key to College. By implementing these ideas, you can definitely build a strong connection with this younger branch of the Kiwanis Family.



Testimonials

Max Rico

UC Riverside Circle K

"I had the privilege of being a prefect leading a group of Key Clubbers at this year's Key to College hosted by Circle K at UC Riverside. I, along with my co-prefect Sara, led our group, Slytherout, through the various workshops hosted that day. Coming from an inner-city underprivileged community, I knew the confusion and many obstacles that these students could have been facing. Some of them reminded me of myself and my friends in high school. I conversed with them as a friend and taught them all that I wish I had known back when I was in their shoes. Key to College was great not only because it taught the Key Clubbers a lot about college, but also because it allowed the volunteers to meet these great high school students and serve as their teachers in regards to college life. To me, Key to College was an event which allowed everyone involved to grow closer, embody leadership, and learn much about themselves and their futures. I will be sure to volunteer again next year."

"Key to College is the type of event that is not only incredibly fun but awesomely rewarding in its ability to leave you with an incredible amount of useful information! During the event, we did lots of amazing activities while learning a ton, not only about Circle K but also about college and the UC system itself from actual students. The level of care and time taken to make the event was so evident- every presentation we received was full to the brim with learning experiences and had multiple opportunities to ask questions. As a high school student, there are few events that have given me an equal degree of real, down-to-earth learning about college, and for that, I will never forget Key to College!"

Ricardo Ruiz

*2016-2017 Division 15
Lieutenant Governor*

Nathan Heger

Former Division 6 North
Key Club Student

"My first Key to College was three years ago. I have attended every Key to College ever since then. I remember when how I felt that day. I was a shy little sophomore in high school. All of the college students were so full of energy. The skits that were held during the general session was my favorite part. They were very educational and engaging. This event was very beneficial for high school students to attend since it gives them a sneak peek into the life of college. I will continue to go to this annual event."





If you have any questions on planning Key to College, please do not hesitate on contacting any member of the District Kiwanis Family and Foundation Committee! Good luck with planning!

Acknowledgements:

The first edition of the *Key to College* Manual was created and compiled by the 2016 - 2017 CNH Circle K District Kiwanis Family and Foundation Committee:

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Helpful Links:

Circle K International Website

CNH Circle K Website

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