

# Fill the Seat Policy

The Fill the Seat Policy was proposed by the Board of Directors in the fall of 2014 and endorsed by 84% of clubs consulted. A January 2015 letter from the Board of Directors to leaders announced that this policy would be piloted as of April 1, 2015 and apply to exchanges leaving as of July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

**The Fill the Seat Policy has been incorporated into the 2015 Club and Exchange Policies, see page 8. [Click here to read.](#)**

## Why is this new policy necessary?

- Unfilled seats lead to disappointed hosts and discouraged clubs. Full exchanges with a mix of people enrich experiences for all participants.
- Potential new members are out there, all we have to do is reach them. Open spaces are opportunities to spread our mission of friendship to new people.

## Who will be affected by this policy?

- Upcoming exchanges and the exchange directors who lead them beginning with exchanges leaving outbound in July, 2015.
- When your exchange is 100 days from departure, your FFI program manager will contact you about listing it in the online catalog if you still have available spaces.
- EDs are encouraged to list the exchange as early as possible in the catalog, ahead of the 100 days, following the same procedure.

## What if I decide to cancel the exchange?

- You are within your rights to cancel the exchange if you feel this is necessary. **However, always speak with your program manager at FFI first.**



Whether it is your first or your 500th time writing a catalog submission, keep the following things in mind!

# The DOs & DON'TS

OF AN EXCHANGE-  
FILLING CATALOG  
SUBMISSION.

## DO

*Include an Itinerary!*



IF YOU DON'T HAVE A FULL ITINERARY, TRY TO AT LEAST LIST SOME HIGHLIGHTS... PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE EXCHANGE!

*Emphasize the "Friendship Force difference".*

TRY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY VOLUNTEERING, EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES, OR LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS. WHAT MAKES THIS DIFFERENT THAN TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF FRIENDSHIP FORCE?

*Use bullets and lists!*

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WRITE PARAGRAPH AFTER PARAGRAPH... WE LOVE QUALITY OVER QUANTITY!

## DON'T

**BE TOO VAGUE.**

LISTING THINGS LIKE "VISIT MUSEUMS" WILL NOT GET AS MUCH ATTENTION AS "SEE AN ORIGINAL WRIGHT BROTHERS PLANE AT THE NATIONAL AIR & SPACE MUSEUM".

**REPEAT THE SAME THING FOR EVERY QUESTION.**

IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE IS NOTHING ELSE INTERESTING ABOUT THE EXCHANGE!

**WORRY ABOUT PROVIDING PHOTOS.**



UNLESS YOU HAVE A HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTO YOU TOOK YOURSELF, WE ONLY USE ONE PER EXCHANGE AND WE CAN PICK PRETTY GOOD ONES!

# F.A.Q.

## What if I list on the catalogue and still don't fill all the seats?

- That's okay! You are not required to fill every seat – you are only required to make your best attempt by publicizing the exchange on the FFI catalog.

## Can I give first priority to applicants from my own community or region?

- Yes! Talk to your program manager for further advice.
- Consider publicizing your exchange in local or regional publications/websites at the same time.

## If I list on the catalogue, do I have to accept everyone who applies?

- No. The ambassador exchange director should use his/her own judgment to decide which applicants to accept and which applicants to reject. The ED should not feel pressured to accept anyone he/she feels is not fit.

## How do I know which applicants will be a good fit for my exchange?

- Ask for references and/or conduct interviews by phone, Skype, etc.
- Talk to your program manager at FFI for further guidelines on vetting ambassadors.

## How can I fill my exchange BEFORE 100 days prior?



1. Confirm an itinerary well in advance.



2. List on the FFI exchange catalog as early as possible.

## *How can I fill my exchange BEFORE 100 days prior?*

1. Confirm an itinerary well in advance.

Most people like to know what the program will include before they commit to it. The earlier you can tell people the exact dates, price and activities, the better your chances of filling the exchange. (This is especially important for engaging potential new members – they will not feel comfortable making the commitment without knowing what is included.)

2. List your exchange in local or regional publications/websites as early as possible.

If your Friendship Force region has its own publication (online or otherwise) for filling exchanges, list there as soon as possible. You can give priority to your own club members and publicize your exchange openly at the same time – don't lose a month's worth of publicity just waiting for club members to commit. Instead, hold a certain number of seats only for club members, or hold all applications until a set deadline, giving club members a chance to make up their mind. Talk to your FFI program manager for further advice.

3. List on the FFI exchange catalog as early as possible.

The earlier you list, the more opportunities we have to publicize your exchange through the FFI website, email campaigns and social media. FFI has great resources – our website gets over 200,000 hits every year, and our emailing list exceeds 12,000 people. Let us help you fill your exchange by listing it on the catalog as early as possible. Avoid the stress of rushing to fill your exchange at the last minute.

Questions? Your FFI Program Manager is eager to help! Or write to [support@thefriendshipforce.org](mailto:support@thefriendshipforce.org).