

# Lions Overview

PDG Mike Kerek

Numerous Lions are brought in with no orientation, no training, and no real understanding of Lions in general. This is exacerbated when new Lions are asked to take leadership positions within their first year.

**Orientation should be an automatic part of any new Lion's experience;** at minimum, there should be a resource person, preferably the Lion's sponsor, who is available to guide, answer questions, etc. This only works if the sponsor knows what he or she is talking about! Invest the time – too many people quit because they feel “lost” and never really a part of the club. There are several training outlines available for any club who is interested.

It should also be up to everyone in the club to explain little aspects of meetings, events, etc as they are happening or discussed, so the new Lion is included instead of left out. A perfect example was a Lion in my club who, after a couple of meetings, finally reached out and asked, “What's up with this ‘Bite ‘em’ thing?” Oops!

New officers should receive training. No new Lion should be placed in secretary, treasurer, or membership chair positions, as there is a lot to know – if that is the only option, find help for them! Any Lion who finds themselves in this situation can call me at 740-412-4692 or email [mjkerek@msn.com](mailto:mjkerek@msn.com) and I will find you someone to walk you through all your questions and concerns. NEVER hesitate to ask for help! There is a wealth of information available, and a large number of fellow Lions who are happy to share it. There is also a lot of information on LCI's website that is available to all.

Resource links for Club Officers:

<https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/resources-for-members/resource-center/club-officers>

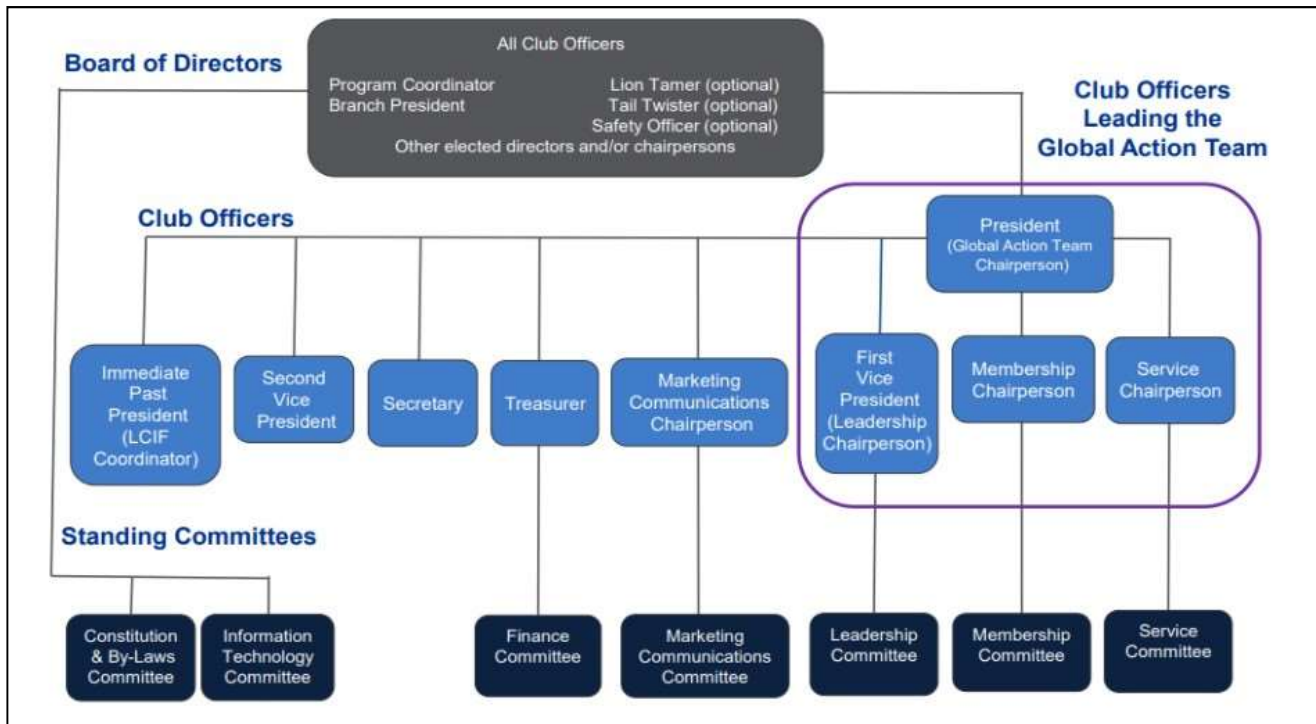
<https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/resources-for-members/resource-center/club-officers-training>

<https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/resources-for-members/resource-center/finance-resources>

This is only a 45 minute session, so we will only scratch the surface of Club Operations and resources. If you want or need more, let me know. I am a firm believer that if you don't know your product, you can't sell it – and Lions is the product we are selling to others.

If you get nothing else out of this lesson, take these things with you:

1. If you want effective and helpful club members, you have to provide the tools and resources to make them effective and helpful. Give them the knowledge they need. They don't know what they need to know.
2. If you come across something you don't understand, ASK!



All Clubs have, or at least SHOULD have, two accounts:

Administrative: Club dues, tail twisting, internal 50/50, any event where only Lions contribute. This money can be used as needed pending board approval.

1. What is not allowed are any wages, payments, or gifts to Lions that have cash value like gift cards. Plaques, certificates, little gifts, anything like that are fine.

Philanthropic: ANY money brought in from the public. This money MUST be spent on philanthropic causes, pending board approval.

1. If selling things, please note that your club does have to pay sales tax to the state! This can also apply to certain food venues. Check the law.

If you are the treasurer, please note that you have to file with the IRS and the Ohio State Attorney General every year – most clubs by November 15, as Lions years typically run July 1 0 June 30. There are a few exceptions in our district. Make sure you know how your club operates. It is up to the other board members to ensure that the treasurer has taken these steps. You are responsible for maintaining both accounts, (and any additional accounts, bequests, CDs, etc.) and reporting to the board and membership each meeting the status of the accounts. It is an excellent idea to have an audit each year, internally or externally, to protect not only the club, but the treasurer!

If you are the secretary, you need to keep the membership updated in MyLCI each month, even if there are no changes; put activities (at least past events) in MyLion; take minutes of each meeting and distribute them to the members at or before the next meeting, (and keep a file of these, as they are

legal documents – you are required by law as a non-profit to hold board meetings and record what transpired!) and post the next year’s officers in April or May after club elections.

Your membership chair, if he or she is effective, is not the one who has to recruit all the new members. Rather, that person is like a “closer” at a car dealership, someone the members can come to with a prospective new member to answer any and all questions and to help that prospect overcome any hesitations. This person needs a strong understanding of Lions, club operation, and an engaging personality.

I don’t know why people balk at being club president, particularly if he or she is a regular attendee anyway. It’s the easiest job in the officers! If you have a set agenda, (and an example is provided on the website,) it’s easy to follow. You run the meetings and “oversee” the committees. Most clubs have established personnel running events. Participate in what you can. It’s easy!

Having a Club Administrator is a huge help to any club – often the older members have a hard time with some of the on-line requirements regarding LCI. A club administrator has access to all the various functions and can act as an assistant or support to the other officers. This person should be computer savvy.

Projects: There are two basic categories – fundraisers and service projects.

Fundraisers are exactly what they sound like, ways to raise money to give away in philanthropic causes. The ways to raise money are limited only by your imagination.

1. A club killer is focusing only on fundraising and writing checks. We are a SERVICE organization, and people join to help other people. Providing funds to needy individuals and organizations is necessary and good, but it doesn’t provide the feel-good moments that everyone needs.

Service projects can be any assistance to others where hands-on is the basis. It doesn’t have to be life altering to provide a service – even running a games area for kids at an event provides family memory opportunities.

**We take on global challenges together.**

As community needs have increased, Lions have broadened their focus toward humanitarian efforts. Each Lions club is autonomous, and therefore may choose projects and activities that fit the lifestyles of its members and impact the community the greatest.

**DIABETES**  
Reduce the prevalence of diabetes and improve the quality of life for those diagnosed.

**ENVIRONMENT**  
Sustainably protect and restore our environment to improve the well-being of all communities.

**HUNGER**  
Ensure all community members have access to nutritious foods.

**VISION**  
Prevent avoidable blindness and improve the quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired.

**CHILDHOOD CANCER**  
Help those affected by childhood cancer survive and thrive.

Partnerships are a great opportunity for clubs to reach more people and to establish great relationships with other people at the same time. As an example, Reynoldsburg Lions Club has partnered just this past year, doing numerous service projects and fundraisers even through the pandemic, with the City of Reynoldsburg, Reynoldsburg Parks and Rec, City of Reynoldsburg Police, Reynoldsburg Community Association, Reynoldsburg City Schools, Impact Church Reynoldsburg, Summit Station UMC, VFW, and Lions from Summit Station, Beechcroft, Grove City, and Troy clubs. But the partnerships won't happen unless you ask.

Many clubs have set-in-stone projects each year, with the same people running them. As some clubs have learned the hard way prior to the pandemic, what happens when the person running things is no longer there? As for the pandemic, what happens when you rely on only one way of operating and that option is no longer an option? Get other people involved, and add at least one new thing each year. It keeps the club fresh and the members motivated.

Find ways, 1-2 times a year, when your club does something together just because. You need those bonding times.

When you get a new member in, give him or her a job; find out what motivates them and find something that fits. Listen to ideas and help bring them to fruition.

**Other items to note:**

1. Religion, politics, and race-related issues (such as BLM) are not allowed in meetings or any Lions event. Period. You can have a guest speaker from one of these areas, but the club cannot endorse any side, and the speaker cannot use the opportunity for plugging his or her own agenda. The only exception to religion, in clubs that accept it, are invocations or benedictions at meetings. Not religious discussion.
2. There are three sayings that should never be stated.
  - a. That's the way we've always done it.
  - b. We tried that 20 years ago and it didn't work.
  - c. If you do that, I quit!
3. Lions is much bigger than your local club. Visit a few other clubs, maybe a district event, and learn about your organization! You'll meet some fascinating people along the way, gain new ideas, and stay motivated.
4. Acronyms are the bane of most new Lions. I've provided a resource list of most of them, but try to explain to the newbies what these mean – not just spelling out the acronym, but what the positions are.
5. News flash! Times have changed, society has changed, the expectations have changed. If you operate your club the way it always has operated, you won't be around much longer. The most successful clubs are the ones that listen to their members, particularly the newer and/or younger ones, and the community, and shape themselves accordingly.

This is an overview only due to time constraints. If you want or need more information about anything Lions related, let me know – if I don't have the answer, I will get it for you or direct you to the resource you need. I've been a Lion since 1999, and the only two guaranteed things are that the core mission of service has stayed the same, and there will always be a need for Lions service. How you and your club goes about achieving this mission is, hopefully, always changing. I wish you the best of luck!