



**CLUB  
MEMBERSHIP  
CHAIRPERSON**

**Lions of South Carolina**

**Club Officer Training**

**HANDBOOK #5**

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## **The Club Membership Chairperson**

The position of club membership chairperson is important to the health and vitality of your Lions club and its ability to serve the community. Club membership chairpersons assist their clubs with membership growth.

Growth is achieved through new member recruitment and membership satisfaction, which results in members staying and serving longer with their club. Membership satisfaction is the feeling that you want Lions to have by being a member of your club. By encouraging Lions to participate in club activities, they will feel satisfied and the club will retain more members. Remember, retention is simply a result of Lions' being happy with their club experience.

The membership chairperson is an elected officer of the club and a member of the board of directors. These two facts underscore the importance of that position. It is only with a group of dedicated Lions that we can fulfill our motto: "We Serve"

### **Membership Committee**

Your membership committee can be structured in the way that best fits your club's needs; however, LCI recommends including the following club members:

- Last year's membership chairperson
- Next year's potential membership chairperson
- Any club members interested in new member recruitment or member satisfaction

### **Constitutional Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Create a plan for club membership growth and present the plan to the board of directors for approval and support.
- Understand the different membership types and programs offered by LCI.
- Create a plan for membership satisfaction and present it to the club's board of directors for approval and support.

- Understand and incorporate membership satisfaction programs into membership growth initiatives.
- Encourage the recruitment of new members and promote award programs to the club members.
- Form a membership committee and work with it throughout the term.
- Ensure new members receive New Member Orientation and participate in the Lions Mentoring Program.
- Serve as a member of the zone level membership committee.
- Submit Membership Chairperson Recruiting Reports and the Club Membership Satisfaction Report to club officers once each month.
- Cooperate with other club committees to fulfill position responsibilities.
- Assist club officers in organizing a Club Excellence Process workshop to examine your community's needs, assess your current membership satisfaction, and develop action plans.
- Conduct exit surveys with members who leave the club.

It is important for everyone to note that nowhere in this list does it say that the Membership Chairperson is responsible for recruiting all the new members himself/herself. That responsibility is borne by every member of the club. The membership chairperson creates the plans, sends the reports, and encourages the members in their efforts. The focus should be that the result of membership growth is greater service to those in need in our communities.

A new responsibility for the Membership Chairperson begins July 1, 2017 as the Club GMT Chairperson, a one-year position as a club officer and member of the Board of Directors. More details will be available in July.

Any plan for membership growth in a club must have two components, the recruitment of new members and the retention of the members we already have.

## **Membership Growth**

Membership in a Lions club is a privilege because a Lion can be a part of the largest and best service club organization in the world. It is a privilege because Lions are respected members of their communities, and it is a privilege because Lions can work together to make their communities better places to live by living their motto, "We Serve."

For the most part membership growth takes place at the club level, except for forming new clubs which can be initiated by an existing club, individual Lions who see an opportunity for a new club, or by the district.

There are three ways of growing our membership:

- One new member at a time
- One satisfied member at a time
- One new club at a time

Each of these methods of growth can be successful but a well-organized integration of all three methods, using each where and when it is most appropriate, will provide continued net gains in membership to keep up with the needs of a community.

Many Lions and many clubs are not aware of all the options that are available for members. The Membership Categories and Membership Types are important considerations for prospective or current members who may not be able to meet the obligations of active membership. LCI offers several membership categories to fit their needs. They are pertinent for all three ways of growing membership.

## **Membership Categories**

The following membership categories can be explained by specialists from the GMT or at region or zone meetings. The possible choices might make membership in a Lions club practical for someone who is not able to attend most meetings but does want to be involved in more service.

Active Member – Active membership is the “typical” category of Lions membership. Active members receive all benefits and must meet all requirements of Lions membership. An active member in good standing, in a club in good standing, is eligible to seek, if qualified, any office in their club, district, or association, and the right to vote on all matters requiring a vote of the membership. Active members are included in the club delegate formula calculation.

Affiliate Member – An affiliate member is not able to participate as an active member of the club but desires to support the club and its community

service initiatives. An Affiliate Member must be approved by the club's board of directors. An Affiliate Member is eligible to vote on club matters, but may not represent the club as a delegate at district, multiple district, or international conventions. Affiliate Members are not eligible to hold club, district or international office, nor district, multiple district, or international committee assignments. An Affiliate Member is required to pay district, international, and such dues as the local club may charge. The membership category is included in the club delegate formula calculation.

Associate Member – An Associate Member holds primary membership in another Lions club but maintains a residence or is employed in the community served by this club. This status may be conferred by the invitation of the board of directors and shall be reviewed annually. The club shall not report an Associate Member on its Membership and Activities Report.

An Associate Member may be eligible to vote on club matters, but may not represent the club as a delegate at district, multiple district, or international conventions. An Associate Member is not eligible to hold club, district or international office, nor district, multiple district or international committee assignments through this club. Associate Members do not pay International, district, or multiple district dues. A club may confer dues on an Associate Member. This membership category is not included in the club delegate formula calculation. Associate members can only be added or dropped by Headquarter staff.

Honorary Member – An honorary member is not a member of the Lions club but may be granted honorary membership by a Lions club for having performed outstanding service. The club will pay entrance fees and international and district dues on such a member, who may attend meetings, but is not entitled to any privileges of active membership. This membership category is not included in the club delegate formula calculation.

Life Member – A life member is a Lion who has maintained active membership for at least 20 years, or at least 15 if the member has reached age 70. Life membership may also be granted to a Lion who is critically ill. Life Members are recommended by the club to the association with a payment of \$650, in lieu of all future dues to the association. A Life Member has all the privileges of active membership. If a Life Member transfers to

another club, they automatically become a Life Member in that club. This membership category is included in the club delegate formula calculation.

Member-at-Large – A member-at-large is a member of a club who is unable to regularly attend club meetings but desires to retain membership in the club. This membership category is conferred by the board of directors and is reviewed by the board every six months. A Member-at-Large cannot hold office or vote in district or international meetings or conventions. This membership category is included in the club delegate formula calculation.

Privileged Member – A privileged member is a Lion who has been a member for 15 or more years but must relinquish active status because of illness, infirmity, advanced age, or other reasons. A Privileged Member will pay such dues as the local club may charge, which includes district and international dues. A Privileged Member has the right to vote and be entitled to all other privileges of membership except the right to hold club, district, or international office. This membership category is included in the club delegate formula calculation.

## **Membership Types**

LCI offers special membership programs for families, college students, former Leos, and young adults, in addition to regular membership. These membership types have special considerations regarding the dues and entrance fees that are charged by Lions Club International. Club, district, and multiple district dues are decided by the individual clubs, district, and multiple districts.

Regular Member – This is our “standard” membership. Regular membership is for community members interested in volunteering, serving the community, and making our world a better place. Regular members pay an entrance fee of \$25 or a charter fee of \$30. Note: Each of these fees will be \$35 effective July 1, 2017. Additional district, multiple district, and club dues apply.

Family Member – The Family Membership Program provides families with the opportunity to receive a special dues discount when they join a Lions club together. The first family member (head of household) pays full international dues of \$43 annually, and up to four additional family

members pay only half the international dues (\$21.50 annually). All family members pay the one-time entrance fee or charter fee. The Family Membership Program is open to family members who are (1) eligible for Lions membership, (2) currently in or joining the same club, and (3) living in the same household and related by birth, marriage, or other legal relationship.

To receive the family membership dues rate, complete the Family Unit Certification Form on MyLCI. When chartering a club, complete the certification on the Report of Charter Members.

Family member units, under the Family Membership Program, will receive only one copy of LION Magazine.

Family members will be subject to the year-and-a day rule with respect to the club delegate formula provision.

Student Member – Student membership allows students to make new friends and help others in their community at the same time. Students enrolled in an educational institution who are between the age of legal majority in the jurisdiction in which they reside and through the age of 30 pay no entrance fee or charter fee and half the international dues of \$21.50.

The Student Member Program defines “student” as an individual enrolled in an educational institution. New student members must be invited and approved by the club’s board of directors. Student members continue to receive the dues and concession until graduation, notice of student status change, or once the student reaches age 31. All qualifying student members are Active Members with all rights and privileges.

Students over age 30 who are joining a Campus Lions club pay a \$10 entrance fee and full international dues. To receive the student member dues rate, complete the Student Member Certification on MyLCI. When chartering a club, complete the certification on the Report of Charter Members.

Leo Lion Member – Leo Lion membership allows current or former Leos between the age of legal majority and through age 30, who have been a Leo for at least a year and a day, to continue doing volunteer work with LCI



as a Lion. Leo Lions pay no entrance fee or charter fee and pay half international dues. To receive the Leo Lion dues rate, complete the Leo to Lion Certification and Year of Service Form or club charter application on MyLCI. To encourage Leo Lions to invite their friends, young adults between the age of majority and through age 30 who join a Leo Lions club receive the same fee waivers and dues discounts as Leo to Lion members.

Former Leo Member – Former Leos over the age of 30 who have been a Leo for at least a year and a day pay no entrance fee or charter fee when joining a Lions club. To receive the fee waiver, complete the Leo to Lion Certification and Years of Service Form or club charter application on MyLCI.

## **One New Member at a Time**

Every Lion has heard a story about asking an acquaintance “Why aren’t you a Lion?” with the response being that no one had ever asked him/her to join a club. That is the basis for the *Just Ask!* New Member Recruiting Guide for Club ([ME-300](#)). This booklet presents a coordinated program to recruit several members through a process often called a membership social. Except for the social informational meeting, all the advice in this booklet is also appropriate for individual invitations to join the club.

All too often inviting new members into a club is left to chance. Members are encouraged to invite their friends and family to join the club, but no goals are set, no plans are made, and no new members are invited.

Just imagine what your club could do with more Lions. Every club needs members to achieve its service goals, and new members can help expand your ability to serve while bringing fresh ideas, more energy, and new skills to your club.

*Just Ask!* is designed to guide a club through the process of recruiting new members and effectively managing club growth. Although the concept is simple – just ask community members to join – following this guide will help a club prepare an effective outreach plan that will ensure success when they are ready to ask.

By using the information in the *Just Ask!* booklet district leaders will be able to help clubs have a greater presence and impact on their communities. Lions have been very successful at recruiting new members and can continue that trend by following the *Just Ask!* advice.

### **One Satisfied Member at a Time**

The best way for a club to have an impact on and be recognized by a community is to consistently provide services that are needed and appreciated. That is often called a healthy club, one that fulfills its obligations.

To ensure that a Lions club remains healthy and vital, you need to consider the experience and expectations of belonging to your club. If you went to a restaurant and it did not meet your expectations, would you go back? The same goes for a Lions club!

Along with welcoming new members, it is important to make sure that they begin participating in club activities right away. If club members feel welcome, comfortable, and are involved in community service, they will remain part of a club for a long time. The focus cannot be only on new members. It is equally important that all members are comfortable and involved.

Unfortunately for several decades, membership in Lions clubs in the United States has declined rather than grown. The decline is not because new members are not joining Lions clubs, it is because more current members are leaving than are joining. LCI has recognized this and has devised several strategies for ensuring member satisfaction leading to more Lions staying in their clubs. The LCI booklet "*Membership Satisfaction Guide*" ([ME-301](#)), presents a comprehensive program for assessing the elements of a club that lead to member satisfaction. It also presents strategies for determining what change, if any, would lead to improvement in retention of current members.

Research shows that people become Lions for many reasons. The most common are:

- To serve their community,
- To be involved with a specific service or cause,
- To be with friends,

- To become a leader in the community,
- To be with other family members who are Lions.

How can a club provide the experiences its members are seeking?

Keeping a Lions club efficient, productive, and meaningful to its members results in many benefits:

- A club that is vital and a respected part of the community.
- The ability to provide service locally and globally.
- The ability to offer personal and professional growth opportunities to its members.
- A club that provides enjoyable fellowship.

How do you assess member satisfaction?

The first step to ensuring that members have a positive experience is to know what they want from membership in their Lions club. Understanding what its members think about being a Lion will help the club direct its efforts. Making changes based on club members' needs and desires is the key to a good experience for them.

Members feel involved when they are asked for their opinions. Ask members: Why is the club here? Do our activities demonstrate this? If a non-Lion looked at one year of our club activities, what would they think was important to our club? Remember to check regularly to see if your members' responses change.

The *Membership Satisfaction Guide* also has a sample Member Questionnaire form that can be customized and used to collect responses from a club.

A club might choose to assess why members have left in the past by contacting former members of the club to find out why they left. A sample Former Member Questionnaire form is also included in the guide.

Losing members is an issue for many clubs, but the reasons why members leave are often the same:

- Unproductive meetings – Lions need to feel that club meetings were a good use of their time, that something was accomplished, that their opinions were heard and valued, that being there was important, and they want to leave with a smile on their faces because they enjoyed the meeting and fellowship.
- Personal reasons – When a Lion leaves for personal reasons, something in their lives has changed and their Lions membership became a lower priority in their lives. The two most common personal reasons for leaving are that being a member required too much of a time commitment or the dues were too expensive. Regarding time, not everyone can always do everything. Maybe a Lion cannot attend every meeting but does show up for service projects. Is there a need to change the time or place of meetings? If a club meets twice a month, one meeting could be held on a weekday evening and the other on a Saturday morning. That would help those working Lions with long commutes who have trouble making evening meetings. About the expense issues, is it the dues that are too expensive or the add-on expenses like meals, 50-50s, and raffle tickets? A Lions meeting can be held without a meal or with an optional meal earlier than or after the meeting. It can also be held without the requirement of extra monetary donations.
- Membership issues – The most common dissatisfactions in this category were not enough younger members, no encouragement of family participation, not treating women fairly, and being unable to network for professional development. The solution for most of these issues seems to rest with the appreciation of diversity in the make-up of the club. The make-up of the membership can only be changed when more members are invited to join the club. Targeting or soliciting younger prospective members and making the club more family friendly could produce better satisfaction.
- Club culture – A Lions club is the sum of its members. As membership changes, clubs must adjust. The goal is to get new members involved and keep current members excited about the club. The most common issues with club culture relate to feeling out of touch or not part of the group. The solution is to tailor the club's practices to its members. Not everyone has to dress alike. Many members like to come in a Lions shirt and casual pants or slacks. Does that mean that the attorney who has spent the day in court shouldn't come in a suit or the nurse who has spent the day working in a doctor's office is not welcome in

scrubs? The leadership of the club should respect and reflect the values of its members.

- Service – The purpose of Lions clubs is to provide needed service to others. Common comments about service focused on the amount of service to the local community, the type of service that was being done, the opportunities to serve locally, and too much focus on fundraising. Possible solutions to these issues could include adopting new service projects, creation of a branch club to meet a need, and explanation of how the money from fundraisers is allocated among the various service projects.

While these are only suggestions, specific changes as well as when and how they will be implemented must be decided by the club, stated as goals, and finally put into a plan that will result in better membership satisfaction within the club.

## **Building New Clubs, One New Club at a Time**

Forming a new club is a dramatic and exciting way to grow membership. The enthusiasm and high expectations of those new Lions knows no bounds. Their new ideas can inspire other clubs in the district.

Lions clubs have more volunteers in more places than any other service organization in the world. For 100 years, Lions clubs have offered people the opportunity to give back to their communities and help those in need. Whenever a Lions club gets together, problems get smaller. And communities get better. That's because we help where help is needed – in our own communities and around the world – with unmatched integrity and energy.

Organizing a new Lions club gives more people the chance to make a difference, assist those in need, and introduce new projects to local communities. There is no limit to where or how many community-based clubs can be formed. Where there is need, a Lions club can help.

Over the years, 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.

To help with the process of chartering a new club, the Membership Division of LCI has prepared a "Do It Yourself New Club Development Workshop" which contains the following:

- [New Club Development Guide](#), a step-by-step guide for forming a new club, starting with forming and preparing the extension team through the Charter Celebration and ending with the completion of the club's first community project.
- [Lions Club Charter Application](#)
- [Charter Application Checklist](#).
- [Instructions for Completing Application for Lions Club Charter](#).
- [Report of Charter Members](#).
- [Charter Night Planning Guide](#).
- [Better Communities. Changed Lives](#).
- [Making it Happen: Guide to Club Project Development](#).
- [Charter Member Transfer Form](#).

All the above documents are downloadable so you can get started without waiting for the kit to arrive. Using the kit from LCI will provide high quality documents for use in recruiting and for providing the charter member applications to prospective Lions. For more information, contact the Membership and New Club Operations Department at LCI.

## **Choosing a Club Format**

Our world is changing, and today's volunteers are looking for new ways to become involved in relevant issues and serve in a way that fits their ever-changing lifestyles. While community-based clubs are our tradition, we realize that one size does not fit all. That's why we offer several club formats for you to choose from:

- Traditional Lions clubs are ideal for bringing together a group of community-minded people to serve the needs of their community in any way. It offers flexibility to reach new groups of people and serve a variety of communities.
- Campus Lions clubs are designed for college and university students, administrators, faculty, alumni, and other community-minded individuals. Members serve the campus community while developing valuable leadership and business skills. Additionally, students are eligible to receive a special dues discount to make membership more affordable.
- Leo Lions clubs provide an easy transition from a Leo club to a Lions club by offering a special dues discount to graduating Leos and their peers. To charter a Leo Lions club, a minimum of 10 graduating Leos under the age of 30 is required.
- Club branches enable a small group of people to form a Lions club and start making a difference in their community sooner. Members become a part of an existing "parent" Lions club, but select their own projects and activities.
- Special interest Lions clubs are chartered based on a special interest or circumstance; members may share a hobby, professions, culture, or ethnicity. Examples of special interest clubs are:
  - Cyber clubs include members from distant geographic areas – or hold club meetings online for convenience. At least 75% of charter members must work or reside in the multiple district in which the club is formed.

- Champions Lions clubs impact lives and improve communities. With a primary focus on projects that serve Special Olympics athletes, Champions Lions clubs empower and build accepting communities for persons with intellectual disabilities and their families. You can download a copy of the Champions Lions Club Guide ([EX-537](#)) and [brochure](#) on the LCI website.
- Lions Quest clubs help children grow into solid citizens by focusing on providing life skills to children in kindergarten through grade 12.
- Educators Lions clubs
- Entrepreneurs Lions clubs
- First responders Lions clubs
- Medical professionals Lions clubs
- Young adults Lions clubs
- You can also start a new Lions club based on your interests or circumstances, such as an ethnic Lions club.
- Consider starting a family-friendly club and include family members and children in club activities. Family members can receive a special dues discount and children can get involved through the Cub Program.



## What is Needed to Charter a New Club?

- 20 or more charter members (Centennial Charter Members this year)
- A sponsoring club, region, zone, district, cabinet, or district committee.
- Completed charter application and report of charter members.
- Your district governor's approval.
- Appropriate charter fees and certification forms.
  - New Charter Member: \$30 (increases to \$35 July 1, 2017)
  - Transfer Charter Member: \$20
  - Family Member: All family members pay the one-time charter fee.
  - Student Member: Charter fee is waived; prepayment of one year of international dues is required for campus clubs and clubs with a majority of students.
  - Current/Former Leos and Qualifying Young Adults: Charter fee is waived.

New clubs should be based on the needs within the community. Once you find a need, it is easy to charter a new club!

The process of chartering a new Lions club should take between four to eight weeks. If it takes more than eight weeks, you run the risk that members will lose interest and quit before the club becomes formally organized. To keep prospective members engaged if the process is taking longer, consider organizing a club branch so that projects can be conducted and recruiting efforts can continue among the new members. To organize a club branch, you will need:

- A minimum of five branch members
- Elected branch president, secretary, and treasurer
- A sponsoring club and branch liaison
- Your district governor to be informed
- Completed notification form

Once the club branch reaches 20 members, convert into a new club.

Using the kit from LCI will provide high quality documents for use in recruiting and for providing charter members applications to prospective Lions. For further information, contact the Membership and New Club Operations Department at LCI.

Women make up the fastest growing demographic within Lions Clubs International. Women now constitute 30 percent of Lions club members worldwide, up from 13 percent in 2003. While this is a remarkable achievement, there is still much to be done. Since women represent 51 percent of the world's population, shouldn't they constitute a similar percentage of Lions worldwide membership?

Working toward this goal is a critical part of creating diversity, adding new perspectives to club activities, expanding Lions overall membership, and meeting the growing service challenges in a world that needs Lions help more than ever.

## **Recruiting and Retaining New Members**

The first and last word in recruiting and retaining members is orientation.

- Pre-Orientation before a prospective member joins a club whether it be a new or existing club.
- New Member Orientation, during the first few months as a Lion.
- Ongoing Orientation throughout the years of membership.

Pre-orientation requires an open and honest discussion about the club and its expectations of its members as well as the benefits and satisfying moments of being a member. It is extremely important to be up front and honest about the dues structure and time commitments. Be sure to explain the different types and categories of membership. Part of the pre-orientation can include inviting the prospective member to participate in a service project to provide the satisfaction that Lions get out of serving others.

The importance of new member orientation cannot be emphasized enough. The information presented during orientation provides a foundation for new members. It helps them understand how the club functions, what their role will be, and gives them the big picture of their district and the association. When new members are properly informed, they are more likely to feel comfortable, become actively involved in club activities, and remain in Lions for years.

Ongoing orientation involves keeping existing members informed of new opportunities and programs, changes in projects or focus, and what is happening at all levels of Lionism. This can be accomplished using websites and newsletters as well as presentations and discussions at club meetings.

The GLT District Coordinator is responsible for orientation training. Contact your GLT-D to schedule orientation for your new members or your club.

## **New Club Development Workshops**

LCI has experienced new club development consultants that come to a district to train and assist in the formation of new clubs. They are Lions with extensive knowledge in chartering new clubs and can conduct workshops in a flexible three, four, or five-day format. During the workshop, Lions will learn successful key strategies for forming new clubs. It can also enhance the recruiting techniques of experienced Lions in existing clubs; broaden the knowledge of district leaders in membership growth programs in addition to receiving hands-on training from an experienced New Club Development Consultant, all at no expense to the district.

To request a workshop, complete the online [New Club Development Request Form](#). Staff will review the request and if approved, the district will be assigned a new club development consultant. The club organizer will then work closely with the consultant on the logistics of the workshop and the district's objectives.

New Club Development Workshops are a minimum of three days and can last five days depending on the district request. The workshop may include:

- Classroom training on new club formation
- An informational night for prospective members on the last day of the workshop, and
- Certified Guiding Lion Training

The club organizer will work with the consultant to ensure the following are completed by the district prior to the workshop:

- Identify two Certified Guiding Lions.
- Identify a sponsoring club.
- Arrange a workshop training and meeting space.
- Complete a Community Needs Assessment for the prospective area.
- Schedule meetings with community leaders to inform and invite them to become a member.
- Print out recruiting flyers with details of the informational meeting to hand out while recruiting.

The club organizer is the person responsible to ensure the proper follow up is being conducted and that the new club is on target for chartering.

An extension team of 6-10 experienced Lions should also participate in the week-long canvassing of potential new Lions members. LCI realizes this can be difficult, so a minimum of one district leader should be in attendance each day to assist the consultant with recruiting efforts.

Canvassing consists of inviting community and business leaders, as well as residents by making appointments or stopping by their office or homes to invite them to join Lions.

Community leaders are vital to new club development because they are:

- Aware of the needs in their community
- Able to make a difference
- Aware of community organizations, such as Lions
- Skilled professionals who can give the new club a strong foundation
- Able to recruit other leaders

One of the most effective ways to recruit members for a new club is to contact community and business leaders in person. While many Lions might feel uncertain about approaching leaders to discuss Lions, they usually find that many people are generally aware of Lions activities and view the association in a very positive light.

Residents are also vital to new club development because they:

- Have a vested interest in their community
- Know what the needs are
- Can recruit other community-minded individuals

Remember, the number one reason for someone not joining Lions is that they were simply never asked.

LCI will postal mail New Club Development Guides, an extension kit, additional brochures, and applications to the new club organizer.

**Source:** Lions Club Handbook, USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum