



CELEBRATING A NEW CLUB

Charter Night planning guide



Lions Clubs International



Welcome

Charter Night is a special event celebrating the beginning of a new Lions club. During the event, the club is presented with its charter and Lions from the surrounding area have the opportunity to show their support. Generally, the sponsoring club assists the new club in organizing the event.

The information in this guide offers suggestions to help you plan a meaningful and successful Charter Night. You are encouraged to orchestrate the event to reflect the personality of the club and local customs.

Planning the event

Generally, the sponsoring club will help organize the event. However, the event will take several Lions to coordinate. The following roles are recommendations for your planning team, and can be adjusted to meet the team's capacity.

Finance team: This team will ensure that all charter night expenditures are covered. It usually includes the sponsoring and new club treasurers, but may also include other members of either club. This team will also set the admission of the charter night celebration and manage the charter night budget.

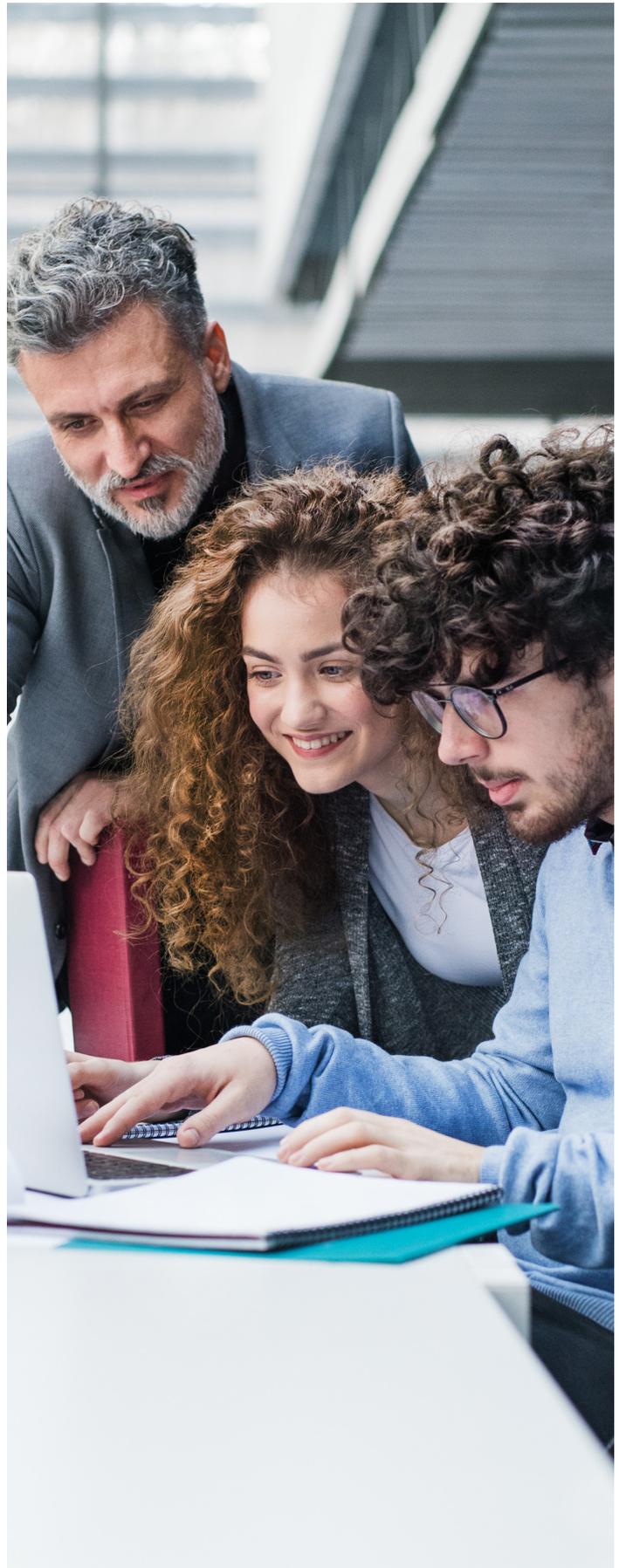
Invitations and entertainment team: This team manages all aspects of the invitations process, including sending invites and confirming attendance. They will secure the entertainment, invitations and provide accommodations for guest speakers. They will also ensure the room is set properly and check that all equipment is in working order. See the section of this guide entitled 'Introduction Etiquette' for guidance on how to ensure the room is properly set and that any dignitaries are recognized appropriately.

Program team: This team plans the program for the night and ensures that all program participants are aware of their roles in the program. They will also oversee the production of a printed program if deemed necessary. A sample program is included in this guide.

Often, a current or past international board member residing in the district is invited to be the guest speaker. Lions Clubs International may pay transportation expenses to and from the event for a current board member, or one of the two most recent past international directors elected from or residing in your multiple district.

It is customary to invite Lions clubs in your district and those within a reasonable distance to a Charter Night. Representatives of other clubs usually bring gifts of club supplies or a cash donation to help the new club get started. The sponsoring club typically purchases the new club's banner and gavel.

Prominent community officials may be invited to the event as well. Be sure to clearly define a response date on the invitation so you will have an accurate count of the number of attendees.



Charter Night checklist

Planning team

- Appoint a Charter Night chairperson.
- Choose a Charter Night date.
- Divide responsibilities among committees.
- Review and approve plans.

Finance team

- Determine the budget.
- Set the cost of admission.
- Approve expenses.

Invitations/entertainment team

- Design and distribute invitations.
- Invite prominent community officials and confirm their attendance.
- Invite guest speakers.
- Arrange travel and accommodations (See section entitled "Travel Arrangements").
- Confirm attendance of members from clubs within the district and the local area.
- Book entertainment.
- Ensure the sound system and equipment is in working order.
- Check that the room is set-up properly.

Program team

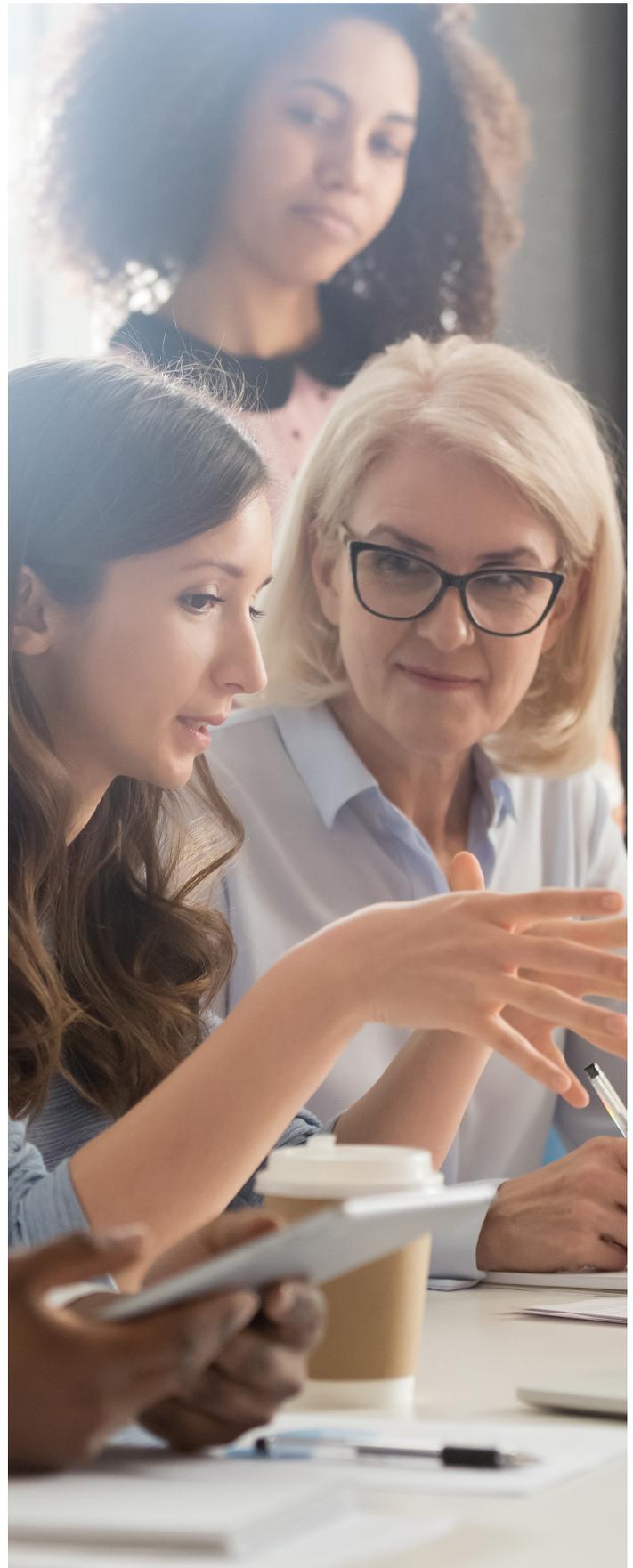
- Set the agenda.
- Design and print the program.
- Distribute programs to attendees.

Public Relations team

- Send news releases to the local media.
- Contact the media and invite them to the event.
- Arrange for a photographer.

Charter Presentation team

- Confirm the district governor has received the charter.
- Plan and practice the charter presentation.



Other planning considerations

Once the planning team has been established, the development of the Charter Night plan should begin. The following areas should be discussed as a team to ensure the successful execution of the Charter Night celebration.

1. Determine the date and time for the Charter Night Celebration.
2. Determine the style of the event. Will the event be formal and require guest to wear formal attire, or will it be an informal environment with casual dress?
3. Determine the budget for the event.
4. Create the invitation list to determine the estimated number of guests in attendance. Invited guests should include Lion leaders and district/local Lions.
5. Choose a location that will meet the estimated guest count and budget.
6. Determine the cost of the event for guests. Charter Night celebrations have an attendance fee to help cover the cost of the celebration. This fee is based on style of event, its location, and any provided food and entertainment.
7. Determine the food for the evening and how it will be procured. Will the location provide the food? Do you need to find a catering company, or will Lions bring food to contribute?
8. Determine the important components of the charter night program (ex. program host, type of entertainment, Lion roles).
9. Determine what role the sponsoring club will have in the Charter Night (ex. financial support, purchasing of club banner, speaker on program).
10. Determine which local dignitaries will be invited (ex. Mayor, community leaders).

Once this list has been discussed as a group, each of the internal teams should report to the Charter Night planning team on progress in their area.



Charter Night program

Charter Nights can be both creative and entertaining. The planning team may choose to add additional elements that will make the event more personal for the club, but some elements are key. A charter night should include:

Installation of new officers - This should include the sponsoring club president, or a district representative such as the District Governor. The 'Club Officer Installation Ceremony Guide' provides more information on the ceremony itself.

Charter member Installation – This should include the sponsoring club president, and either the membership committee chairperson from the sponsoring club or a district officer. The new club president should also have a role, which may include pinning the new members. The 'New Member Induction Guide' provides more information on this ceremony.

Pledge and pinning- This is part of the installation ceremony. Each new charter member will receive a charter member pin and a certificate. Once all members have received their pins, they will recite the pledge. The 'New Member Induction Guide' provides detailed information on the pinning ceremony and the pledge.

The 'New Member Induction Guide' and the 'Club Officer Installation Ceremony Guide' can be found at www.lionsclubs.org.

Contents of the event program

- Cover with club name, Charter Night date, event location and the Lions logo.
- List of the charter club officers, directors and members.
- Program agenda.
- List of people the club wishes to thank.
- List of club contributions.

Launch a membership campaign for charter members

The charter night is a great opportunity to invite individuals to join the club. Plan to have an information table available where individuals can learn more about Lions Clubs International, the club itself, and where they can sign up to join the club. Those who join the club at this time will also be considered charter members, if the Charter Night happens within 90 days of the date the club was chartered. If the Charter Night occurs more than 90 days after the club is chartered, new members who join during the event will be considered regular members.



Sample materials

Below you will find a sample Club President charter acceptance speech and news release. These samples are simply suggestions; we encourage you to personalize the event to make it meaningful to your club and guests.

Sample club president charter acceptance speech

The charter acceptance speech, delivered by the charter club president, sets the tone for the new club. Adapt the speech to meet your needs.

Hello and welcome, everyone. It is a distinct honor for me, as president of the **(club name)** Lions Club, to accept this charter on behalf of my fellow Lions. I would like to express our sincerest gratitude upon officially becoming members of Lions Clubs International, the world's largest humanitarian service club organization.

We are honored to be included in this great association, and eager to begin serving our local and world communities. We fully accept our responsibilities to our club, the association and, most importantly, to our community. The association's motto, "We Serve," will guide us.

We are excited about working closely with our club members, as well as others in the community, to help wherever we see a need. We look forward to the fellowship, teamwork and personal satisfaction we will gain by belonging to our new club.

As president of the **(club name)** Lions Club, I humbly accept the responsibilities of my office. In doing so, I pledge to you my full cooperation, as well as that of my fellow club officers. In turn, we ask for your support, your help, and of great importance, your participation at club meetings and in club fundraising and community service initiatives.

Together, we have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate as we gain personal and professional skills that will last a lifetime.

As we begin our chapter as a new club, let's show how we are a force for good in the community. As Lions, let's demonstrate to everyone we come in contact with the meaning of "Kindness Matters."

Thank you.



Sample News Release

For Information Contact:

(Name)

(Phone number)

(Email address)

For Immediate Release

LIONS CHARTER NEW CLUB IN (CITY)

(City, date) — A new Lions club comes to **(city)** on **(date)** when **(# of charter members)** men and women celebrate the charter night of the **(name)** Lions Club at **(location)** at **(time)**.

During the ceremonies, **(Lions District Governor name or highest ranking dignitary)** will present members of the new club with their official charter. Members of the **(name of sponsoring club)** Lions Club, who sponsored the formation of the **(name of new club)** Lions Club, will also be on hand to congratulate members of the new club.

“I am proud to welcome these men and women into Lions. **(City)** will be proud to have such a fine group of people serving its community,” said **(District Governor, local dignitary or sponsoring club president’s name)**.

The **(new club name)** Lions Club plans to become involved with **(list activities)**.

The **(name)** Lions Club will meet on **(day of week/month)** at **(time)** at **(location)**. Lions clubs are groups of caring men and women who identify needs within their communities and work together to fulfill those needs. For more information or to get involved with the **(name)** Lions Club, please contact **(name)** at **(phone number/add Web site address if appropriate)**.

Lions Clubs International is the largest service club organization in the world. Our 1.42 million members in more than 47,000 clubs are serving in over 200 countries and geographic areas around the globe. Since 1917, Lions have strengthened local communities through hands-on service and humanitarian projects, and we are able to extend our service impact through the generous support of our Lions Clubs International Foundation. We are focused on serving sight, hunger, the environment, childhood cancer and our new global cause, diabetes, to help address some of the biggest challenges facing humanity. Lions have set an ambitious goal of helping 200 million people per year so we can bring even more service to more people than ever before. For more information about Lions Clubs International, visit lionsclubs.org.



Introduction etiquette

The association's Official Protocol is designed to eliminate confusion regarding the proper recognition of Lion dignitaries. Whether for purposes of introduction or head table seating, it provides a simple and definitive answer to the question: "Who comes first?" You may adapt the order to fit your cultural traditions.

Introductions

Introductions usually begin with those lowest on the Order of Precedence and end with the highest-ranking Lion present. When non-Lion dignitaries are present, use a combination of precedence and local custom to decide at what point they should be introduced.

Clubs, districts and multiple districts are required to extend the same rights and privileges as required under official protocol to resident officers as they would extend to officers visiting from other districts, multiple districts or constitutional areas, irrespective of local custom. The principal speaker should acknowledge all dignitaries present.

The following is the official protocol policy of The International Association of Lions Clubs. Only the principal speaker is required to acknowledge all dignitaries present.

Order of precedence

Lions shall be recognized in the following order:

1. International President
2. Immediate Past International President
3. International Vice Presidents (according to rank)
4. International Directors (a) (Board Appointees)*/**
5. Past International Presidents (b)
6. Past International Directors (c)
7. Chairperson, Council of Governors (a)
8. District Governors
9. Association Executive Director
10. Association Secretary
11. Association Treasurer
12. Past Council Chairperson (a)
13. Immediate Past District Governor (a)

14. First Vice District Governor
15. Second Vice District Governor
16. Past District Governor (a)
17. Multiple District Secretaries (Volunteer) (a)
18. Multiple District Treasurers (Volunteer) (a)
19. District Secretaries (a)
20. District Treasurers (a)
21. Region Chairperson (a)
22. Zone Chairperson (a)
23. District Chairperson and Coordinators and GMT/GLT Team Leaders (a)
24. Club Presidents (a)
25. Immediate Past Club Presidents (a)
26. Club Secretaries (a)
27. Club Treasurers (a)
28. Past Club Presidents (c)
29. Multiple District Secretaries (staff) (a)
30. Multiple District Treasurers (staff) (a)

* Appointees by the International President to committees of the International Board of Directors and the LCIF Executive Committee shall be introduced and otherwise recognized before Lions who have held the same office. During introductions, their appointment shall be mentioned.

** Single, sub and multiple district constitution and bylaws or local customs and practice may alter the order of precedence and/or content of numbers 4, 5 and 13 through 30 and in order to include recognition of past board appointees.

Explanation of notes used above:

- a) When more than one is present, they shall be recognized according to the alphabetic order of the family name.
- b) When more than one is present, the one who served most recently is given precedence.
- c) When more than one is present, precedence should be the same as for Past International Presidents (see (b) above). In the event more than one Past International Director who served during the same term is present, then the criteria specified for (a) should be used.



When a Lion holds more than one title, he or she should be recognized for their highest rank. In areas that have positions in addition to those listed above, they should be recognized in accordance with local customs, provided that elected officers always have precedence over those appointed.

Non-Lion dignitaries

Non-Lion dignitaries should be given precedence in accordance with local protocol and/or custom, keeping in mind that if the non-Lion is the principal speaker, then he or she should be seated directly to the right of the chairperson (see below).

Head table seating

The presiding officer or meeting chairperson must always be seated at the most central seat at the table when there is no central podium, shown as seat number one in the following diagram (Figure 1). The principal speaker occupies seat number two. Other Lion dignitaries are to be seated in accordance with the general order of precedence. If possible, there should be the same number of seats to the right and left of the chairperson or presiding officer (typically the club president, district governor, council chairperson or international president).

(Audience)

Figure 1

Guiding Lion	Guiding Lion	Sponsoring Club President	New Club President	Presiding Officer	Speaker or Dignitary	District Governor	Multiple District Extension Chairperson	District Extension Chairperson
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As shown in figure 2, seating at a head table with a podium is essentially the same, but the meeting chairperson or presiding officer is always seated at the left of the podium (facing the audience), and the principal speaker at the right.

(Audience)

Figure 2

Guiding Lion	Guiding Lion	Sponsoring Club President	New Club President	Presiding Officer	PODIUM	Speaker or Dignitary	District Governor	Multiple District Extension Chairperson	District Extension Chairperson
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When the spouses of members are present, they should be seated to the member's left when on the left side of the table, or on the member's right when on the right side of the table.

In most areas of the world, the presiding officer is the sponsoring club president or one of the guiding Lions. If this is the case, adjust the head table accordingly. Once the new club president has been officially installed, he or she usually becomes the presiding officer and conducts the meeting from that point forward.

Master of ceremonies

At some events, the master of ceremonies will be someone other than the chairperson or presiding officer. In such cases, he or she should be seated in accordance with local customs, or at one end of the head table. If, however, his or her place in the general order of precedence dictates a specific seat (e.g., he or she is a past international president at a district function), then follow the order of precedence.



Multiple head tables

If there is more than one head table, the table at the highest level shall be considered the primary one. Care should be taken not to seat Lions of the same rank at different tables.

Head table introduction

Introduction of the head table should begin with the meeting chairperson or presiding officer, then continue from the person with the lowest rank on the order of precedence to the person with the highest. When spouses are present at the head table, they should be introduced with the member's name first (e.g., "Past International Director John Doe and his wife Jane"). If the spouse is a Lion, please include their status as part of the introduction.

Flags and national anthems

If the guest is from a country other than your own, and flags are to be displayed, the guest's flag should also be displayed in accordance with the flag protocol in your country. The same holds true for a dignitary's national anthem.

Calling the meeting to order and adjournment The meeting is usually called to order by the sponsoring club president, the guiding Lion or the presiding officer and is customarily adjourned by the president of the new club.

Travel arrangements

The following tips are designed to help you make your guest's stay more enjoyable.

Before the visit

Provide advance information including:

- An agenda (make it clear what events your guest is expected to attend)
- Dress code (formal, business, etc.) for each event
- Weather conditions in your area
- Background information (newsletters, bulletins, current community projects)
- Provide a script, including background information on recipients, if your guest is expected to assist in giving out awards during the event.
- Be sure to communicate fully and often with your guest. Also, keep in mind that all expenses, including special events (tours, golf, etc.), are the host's responsibility.

Meeting and Greeting Your Guest

For air travel:

- The charter night chairperson should accompany the group which is meeting your guests.
- Meet your guest at baggage claim or a location determined in advance.
- Make sure you are readily identifiable with Lions clothing and/or badges.
- Plan on carrying your guests' luggage.
- Make sure your car is large enough to accommodate your guests and their luggage. In many cases, your guest may have been away from home for a while and have more luggage than you expect. Having an extra car available in case of extra luggage is prudent.

For car travel:

- If your guests are driving, provide them with complete directions.

Make their stay an enjoyable experience

- Confirm hotel arrangements before your guest's arrival.
- Prepare a welcome packet with the final agenda for your event, information about the area and a list of room numbers and/or telephone numbers of key Lions.
- Once you bring your guests to their room, review pick up times and proper dress for the event.
- Give your guests time to settle in.

Departure

- Attend to your guests' departure with the same care you gave their arrival.
- Handle checkout for your guests and arrange for luggage pick up.
- Escort them from their hotel room all the way to the airport.
- Check that your guests' flight is leaving on time and if there is a serious delay, make necessary transportation and hotel arrangements.





Lions Clubs International

Membership Division

Lions Clubs International

300 W 22ND ST

Oak Brook IL 60523-8842 USA

lionsclubs.org

Email: membership@lionsclubs.org

Phone: 630.468.3831