



Lions Clubs International

# CELEBRATING THE NEW CLUB

## Charter Night Planning Guide



# Charter Night Planning Guide

## Celebrating the New Lions Club

Charter Night is a special event celebrating the beginning of a new Lions club. During the event, the club is presented 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, since the event may take several Lions to coordinate, consider forming the following committees:

### **The Executive Committee**

The executive committee reviews and approves all proposed Charter Night activities. This committee is typically comprised of the district governor, sponsoring club president, new club president and new club secretary, in addition to one representative (chairperson) from each of the other committees.

The first task of the executive committee is to appoint a charter night chairperson, typically the new club president, to facilitate the executive committee meetings and serve as the go-to for all planning needs. The next task is to select a Charter Night date. Charter Night usually takes place approximately 90 days after the charter approval date. Since the district governor usually presents the charter, and the sponsoring Lions club and guiding Lions attend, a date should be selected that is convenient for these key leaders as well as members of the new club.

The rest of the executive committee's tasks include dividing responsibilities between the planning committees below and reviewing and approving plans. Include members of the district cabinet, if necessary, to lend their assistance and expertise.

### **The Finance Committee**

The primary purpose of the finance committee is to ensure that all expenditures are covered. Usually, the sponsoring club treasurer and new club treasurer chair this committee.

The budget should be based on a conservative estimate of probable attendance. It is important that the event cost is clearly defined and agreed upon by all concerned. Often, charter member admission prices are levied to cover the district governor and his or her spouse, the guest speaker and any other special guests. If you wish to distribute admission tickets, consider developing a ticket committee to design and print tickets for distribution.

You may also consider taking advantage of Charter Night as an opportunity to raise funds for the new club's administrative account. If the celebration raises funds from Lions and Lion spouses only, the money raised may be placed in the new club's administrative account and used to defray the club's operating expenses.

### **Invitations/Entertainment Committee**

This committee prepares and sends Charter Night invitations, confirms attendance, secures the entertainment, invites and provides accommodations for guest speakers, ensures the room is set properly and checks that equipment is in working order. See the section of this guide entitled "Introduction Etiquette" for guidance to ensure the room is properly set and dignitaries are recognized properly.

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 the Lions clubs in your district and those within a reasonable distance. Representatives of these clubs usually bring club supply gifts or a cash donation to help the new club get started. The sponsoring club typically purchases the club banner and gavel. Prominent community officials may be invited 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.

#### **Program Committee**

The program committee sets the Charter Night agenda and oversees production of the printed program. Have the programs printed well in advance to guarantee they will be ready on time. On the night of the event, the program committee is responsible for ensuring that each attendee receives a program. A sample agenda and program is included in this guide.

#### **Public Relations Committee**

The public relations committee creates and distributes news releases to the local media about the event, arranges for a photographer and personally greets each guest at the event. A sample news release is included in this guide.

Distribute the release no later than three weeks prior to the event and follow-up with the media no later than one week prior to the event. During the event, ask the photographer to take both candid photos and a formal group portrait of the club and its charter.

#### **Charter Presentation Committee**

The charter presentation committee ensures that the charter is properly presented. Consider keeping the charter out of sight until the actual presentation to heighten anticipation. Practice the presentation with the participants before the event so everyone is comfortable. Use this opportunity to have each new member sign the charter.

## **Charter Night Checklist**

#### **Executive Committee**

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

#### **Finance Committee**

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

#### **Invitations/Entertainment Committee**

- 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 Committee**

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

#### **Public Relations**

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

#### **Charter Presentation Committee**

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

## Launch a Membership Campaign for Charter Members

Don't miss the opportunity to launch a special membership drive for additional charter members! Charter members are members who join the club on or before the Charter Night. They receive a special charter member pin, charter member certificate and have the honor of signing the official charter.

### Sample Materials

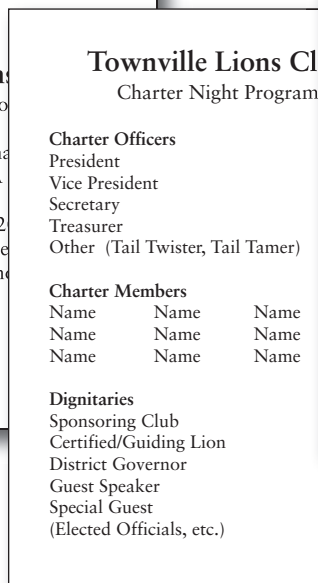
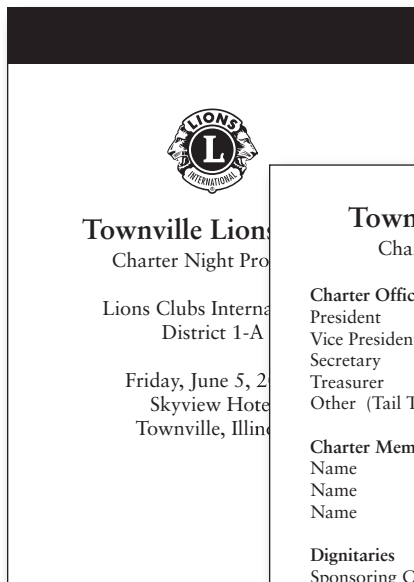
Following you will find a sample program, club president charter acceptance speech and a news release to help you with Charter Night arrangements. These samples are simply suggestions; we encourage you to personalize the event to make it meaningful to your club and guests.

### Program

Contents of the program typically include:

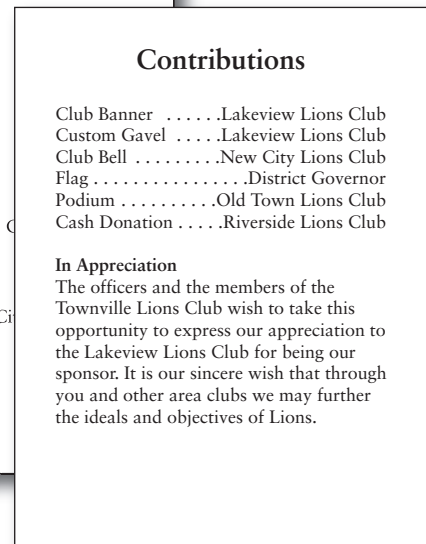
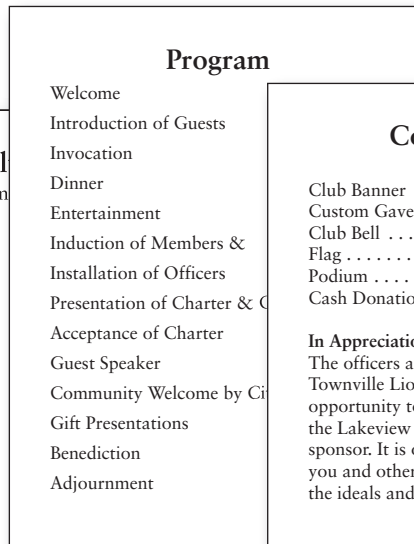
- Cover with club name, Charter Night date, event location and the Lions logo, available at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)
- List of the charter club officers, directors and members
- Program agenda
- List of people the club wishes to thank
- List of club contributions

Sample Program Cover



Sample Page One

Sample Page Two



Sample Page Three

## 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.

District Governor \_\_\_\_\_, visiting Lions and honored guests, it is a distinct honor for me, as president of the \_\_\_\_\_ 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 our service to our local and world communities. We fully accept our responsibilities to our club, the association and most important, our community. We will use the association's motto, "We Serve," to guide our community service and will strive to help wherever there is need.

We are anxious to work closely with our fellow club members, as well as others within the community to meet our service initiatives. We are looking forward to the fellowship, teamwork and personal satisfaction that we will gain through our membership in the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club.

As president of the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club, I humbly accept the responsibilities of my office. In doing so, I pledge to you, the members of my club, my full cooperation, as well as that of my fellow club officers. In turn, we ask for your support, help, loyalty, and of great importance, your attendance at club meetings and participation in club fundraising and community service initiatives. Together, we will be able to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate, and in our own lives, as we gain personal and professional skills that will last a lifetime. Let us now go forth and prove that the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club is a progressive force in our community. Let us demonstrate to everyone with whom we come in contact as Lions, the true meaning of our inspirational guidepost: We Serve.

Thank you.

Sample News Release

For Information Contact:  
(Name)  
(Phone number)  
(E-mail 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 the 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 serving their 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 a group of men and women who identify needs within the community 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 world’s largest service club organization with nearly 1.3 million members in approximately 45,000 clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas around the world. Since 1917, Lions clubs have aided the blind and visually impaired and made a strong commitment to community service and serving youth throughout the world. For more information about Lions Clubs International, visit the Web site at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.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.

## Order of Precedence:

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. Global Membership Team Leaders (a)
9. District Governors
10. Association Executive Director
11. Association Secretary
12. Association Treasurer
13. Past Council Chairperson (a)
14. Immediate Past District Governor (a)
15. Vice District Governor (a)
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 (a)
24. Club Presidents (a)
25. Immediate Past Club Presidents (a)
26. Club Secretaries (a)
27. Club Treasurers (a)
28. Past Club Presidents
29. Multiple District Secretaries (Staff) (a)
30. Multiple District Treasurers (Staff) (a)

Please introduce the following Lions as determined by local custom:

- Multiple District Extension Chairperson
- Extension Chairperson
- Sponsoring Club President
- Guiding Lion
- New Club President
- International Secretaries and Representatives employed by Lions Clubs International or other Lions organizations.

Explanation of notes used above:

- (a) When more than one is present, each shall be recognized according to the alphabetic order of 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 the 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.

- \* 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. After their term of appointment is concluded, special recognition shall cease.
- \*\* Single, sub and multiple district constitution & by-laws or local customs and practice may alter the order of precedence and/or content of numbers 12 through 30.
- \*\*\* Coordinators shall be introduced and otherwise recognized before Lions who have held the same office. At the conclusion of the program and/or campaign, special recognition shall cease.

When a Lion holds more than one title, he or she should be recognized for the highest rank. In areas that have positions in addition to those listed above, they should be recognized in accordance with local customs, provided that elective 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 would occupy seat number two, then other Lion dignitaries 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 (who would normally be 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 |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|

As shown in figure 2, seating at a head table with a podium is essentially the same, except 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 |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|

When spouses are present, they should be seated to the member’s left when on the left side of the table, 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 (emcee) 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.



### **Multi-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 first (e.g., “Past International Director John Doe and his wife Jane”). If the spouse is a Lion, please include the status as part of the introduction.

### **Flags and National Anthems**

If the guest is from a country other than your own, and flags are going 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)
- Communicate fully and often
- Keep in mind local expenses, including special events (tours, golf, etc.), are the host’s responsibility
- Provide a script, including background information on recipients, if your guest is

expected to assist in giving out awards during the event

### **Meeting and Greeting Your Guest**

For Air Travel:

- The charter night chairperson should accompany the group meeting your guests
- Meet your guest 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. Many times your guest may have been away from home for awhile 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, including a map

### **Make the 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 and New Clubs Operations Department  
Lions Clubs International  
300 W 22nd St  
Oak Brook IL 60523-8842 USA  
[www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)  
E-mail: [newclubs@lionsclubs.org](mailto:newclubs@lionsclubs.org)  
Phone: 630.203.3831  
Fax: 630.706.1691