



Club Branch Guide



What is a club branch?

A club branch is a smaller group of at least five people connected to an existing Lions club. The branch has its own meetings and plans its own service projects, but its members still have the same rights and benefits as members of the main club.

Why start a club branch?

Starting a club branch helps Lions clubs grow by welcoming more people from different backgrounds and reaching new communities. It's a flexible option for people who might not be able to attend regular meetings due to busy schedules, where they live, or personal preferences. This makes it easier for more people to get involved in Lions' work.

Benefits of a club branch

A club branch offers many benefits, such as:

- **More service opportunities** – With more members, the club can take on bigger and more projects to help the community.
- **New ideas and energy** – Branch members often bring new ideas and enthusiasm to the club's activities.
- **Stronger community connections** – A club branch can connect with the community in new ways, building relationships and partnerships.
- **Increased flexibility** – Branches can meet at times and places that work better for their members, making it easier for more people to join.

Part 1: Formation and strategy steps to club branch formation

The Global Membership Approach is a simple guide to starting new club branches and increasing membership in Lions clubs. It includes important steps like building a dedicated team, setting a clear goal for the new branch, planning actions to reach that goal and staying organized to keep everything running smoothly.

Step 1: Build a team

You need a strong and committed team to create a successful club branch. A balanced team helps turn the club's goals into reality. Key roles in the team include:

- **Club branch organizer** – This person leads the effort to set up the branch. They plan meetings, assign tasks and guide the team to keep everything on track.
- **Club membership chairperson** – This role focuses on growing the club. They find new ways to recruit members, plan events to attract people and create materials to show what the club is about. They also monitor membership trends and work to keep current members involved.
- **Club marketing chairperson** – This person promotes the club and its activities. They create flyers, manage social media and connect with local businesses and groups. Their job is to build the club's reputation and show how it benefits the community.

Building strong partnerships outside the club is equally important for the branch's success. These key partners include:

- **District governor** – The district governor can provide valuable advice on overcoming challenges and increasing the branch's influence.
- **Community contacts:** Connecting with people in the community helps the club understand local needs. These relationships can lead to shared resources and make the club more visible and respected.

Step 2: Build a vision

A clear vision makes it easier to excite members and helps the branch find its place in the community. Answering the following three key questions will shape the branch's identity.

1. **Where will the branch be located?**
Picking the right location is important to meet the community's needs. Consider the people who live there, whether similar organizations are nearby and the chances for growth. Look at existing Lions clubs in the area and consider how your branch can add value by filling service gaps or offering something different.
2. **What is the branch's purpose?** Decide who the branch is for and what it hopes to achieve. Connect with people who share similar values and interests. This could include different age groups, hobbies, or ways of getting involved in the community. You can also ask residents what kinds of services or projects they'd like to see.

3. Will the branch have a specialty focus? Consider whether the branch will specialize in helping the environment, improving education, or working with young people. A specific focus can make your branch stand out, attract members who care about that cause and give everyone a clear purpose.

Answering these questions early will help the branch succeed and reach its Lions Club goals over time. Clear goals are important as your club prepares to create a membership plan.

Set specific goals – Decide on goals for both the short term and long term. Make sure your goals are realistic, measurable and easy to track so you can see your progress.

Step 3: Build a plan

The “build a plan” step takes the ideas from the “build a vision” step and turns them into an easy-to-follow plan for your team.

Make sure everyone knows the goals and understands their role in achieving them. Break big tasks into smaller, manageable action steps to keep the team on track.

Create action steps – Write a list of actions to attract new members. For example, you could host community events, partner with local organizations, or use social media to reach more people. Assign each task to a team member so everything gets done.

Check your resources – Look at what your club already has, like funds, people and materials. If you need more, plan how to get them. This could include finding sponsors or asking for donations that match your club’s goals.

Step 4: Build success

Once your club branch is up and running, keeping it successful means managing it well and keeping members engaged.

Here’s what to focus on:

Add the club branch in the Lion Portal – Register the branch in the Lion Portal. This will help you manage member sign-ups, reports and other tasks.

Celebrate achievements – Create a program to recognize important milestones and thank members who contributed to starting the branch and supporting the parent club’s mission. Show how the branch’s service projects align with the parent club’s goals. Plan regular events or simple ceremonies to celebrate both big and small accomplishments.

Encourage improvement – Use surveys or group discussions to gather input on the branch and parent club’s activities. Be open to changes based on what members suggest.

Following these steps, your club branch can create a positive and supportive environment where members feel valued and motivated to help achieve your goals. This will ensure long-term success and make a meaningful impact in the community.

Part 2: Club branch operations

Running a club smoothly is important to keeping members interested and ensuring everything works well. This section will look at the best ways to manage the club, communicate clearly and encourage members to get involved, focusing on making changes in leadership and activities as smoothly as possible.

Parent club roles and responsibilities

The parent club's job is to help the branch stay active, committed and excited about its work. The branch will need the parent club's support and teamwork to succeed.

Parent club responsibilities

- Helping start the club branch
- Appointing an experienced Lion to be the branch liaison
- Submitting the club branch application
- Reporting the club branch members in the Lions Portal

Processing membership applications for new club branch members

- Ordering supplies for the club branch
- Updating branch officers on an annual basis through the Lions Portal
- Sharing the forms found at the end of this guide to help branch club officers plan and report back to the parent club

Club branch responsibilities

- Creating a plan for growing membership
- Training and supporting officers
- Holding elections for officers every year
- Encouraging members to take part in parent club meetings and activities
- Encouraging members to join in district activities and events

Club branch structure

Club branch executive committee

The club branch executive committee includes the branch president, branch secretary, branch treasurer and branch liaison. The first members of the branch can stay in their roles until the end of the first fiscal year. If re-elected, they can serve for a second year. The fiscal year for Lions International is July 1 – June 30.

Club branch president responsibilities

- Leading the branch
- Serving on the board of directors of the parent club
- Attending board meetings and general meetings of the parent club
- Understanding the parent club's constitution and rules
- Staying in regular contact with the parent club
- Creating a plan for the club branch's first year
- Setting up committees to help run the club branch
- Leading club branch meetings
- Choosing and planning community service projects

Club branch secretary responsibilities

- Managing the branch's administrative tasks
- Keeping records for the branch, like meeting minutes, attendance, elections and membership details
- Updating officer information each year and submitting it to the parent club using the Club Branch Application/Officer Update form.

Ensure the club branch officers submit the Club Branch Application/Officer Updates document to you on an annual basis.

Club branch membership

Branch member

To join a branch, a person must get approval from the parent club. Branch members are encouraged to attend the parent club's general meetings. When they do, they can vote like other members. Branch members can also help with branch committees and, if elected, serve on the parent club's board of directors.

Recruitment

Recruiting for a club branch is the same as recruiting for a regular club. The Just Ask! guide is a great tool for planning how to recruit new members.

You can ask your branch liaison, club branch organizer, or parent club membership chairperson for ideas. Social media is another excellent way to promote your branch and its activities.

Retention

Once members join your branch, use the Membership Satisfaction guide to ensure they enjoy being part of your club and receive what they expect.

Dues

New members joining your club branch pay a one-time fee of US\$35. Members transferring from another Lions club or those left in good standing within the past year can participate without paying the fee.

Branch members are responsible for paying international, district and multiple district dues. Your branch can also set its dues, which can differ from the parent club's. The parent club treasurer handles international, district and multiple district dues. However, branch dues are kept in the branch's administrative account. Branches may not be required to pay dues to the parent club. There are discounts for family members, students, current or former Leos and young adults who qualify.

Adding a new member

For a club branch to add a new member, they must submit the Membership Application to the parent club's board of directors for approval. After approval, the parent club enters the new member into the Lions Portal online.

Membership changes

If a member leaves the branch or their membership information changes, club branch leaders must fill out the Report of Branch Membership and send it to the parent club secretary.

Club branch meetings

Club branches and Lions clubs should aim to meet at least twice a month. Many branches hold one general meeting and one executive committee meeting each month.

Club branch officers should check out the *Your Club, Your Way* guide for tips on planning meetings that work for members' needs and schedules. This resource can help create meetings that are both effective and enjoyable.

Constitution and bylaws

Since the branch is part of the parent club, it is governed by the parent club's constitution and bylaws, the constitution and bylaws of Lions International, multiple districts, and policies adopted by the International Board of Directors.

Communications

Every club branch should choose a simple way to communicate with its members. This could be a newsletter, a Facebook page, or a blog. The branch secretary usually keeps members informed and connected.

Communication methods to consider

- Newsletter – Share news about events, meetings, and important updates.
- Facebook page – Post updates, photos, and event details to keep members involved and encourage interaction.
- WhatsApp or group messaging – Quickly send reminders or urgent updates so everyone stays in the loop.
- Email updates – Send important information to members' inboxes to ensure they don't miss anything.

Membership development

A strong club branch has happy, active members and a clear plan to attract new members. Growing membership helps the branch provide more service and make a more significant impact.

Branch financing budget

Most branches use a budget system to plan their income and expenses for a set period. This helps branches organize their finances and avoid overspending.

Your branch should create two budgets for the fiscal year (July–June):

Administrative budget

- This budget covers the branch's operations, like dues, materials and costs, which are not part of activities.
- Most of the money for this budget comes from member dues, but it can also include income from things like raffles, meal charges, club fines, or auctions.

Activities budget

- This budget is for funding the branch's service projects and activities.
- Money for this budget should come from fundraising events organized by the branch in the community.

Branches can open their own bank accounts and decide if the parent club will be listed on the account as a co-signer. The branch must provide the parent club with a Monthly Branch Financial Report, which can be found at the end of this guide and shared with club branch officers. This report helps the parent club guide and support the branch.

Remember, the parent club will pay district, multiple district and international dues on behalf of the branch. If the parent club doesn't have access to the branch's account, the branch will need to transfer funds to cover these dues.

Fundraising

Money raised through fundraising must only be used for the **activities budget** to support branch projects and events. It cannot be used to cover administrative costs under any circumstances. However, the branch can deduct necessary expenses directly related to the fundraiser (like supplies or venue rental).

Converting from a club branch to a Lions club

If a parent club wants to turn its club branch into a full Lions club, the branch needs at least 20 members. Existing branch members don't have to pay charter or transfer fees when this happens. To start the process, email NewClubs@lionsclubs.org.

Any money left in the club branch's account will be moved to the new Lions club's account. Changing a branch into a Lions club won't affect the parent club's chances of earning awards like the Membership Satisfaction Award or the Club Excellence Award.

Dissolving a club branch

A club branch can be dissolved if most of the parent club's members, including the branch members, vote to do so. If a branch is dissolved, its members stay part of the parent club and should still be encouraged to attend meetings and activities. The parent club can dissolve a branch through the Lion Portal or by having a club officer send written notice that the branch is no longer active.

Any money left in the branch's account when dissolved will be transferred to the parent club's account for community projects in the branch's area.



Prepare the information below for your recruitment profiles and approach to engaging specific community groups to attract prospective members to join your club branch.

Target audience:

Area(s):

Club Branch Type:

- Traditional
- Virtual _____
- Specialty _____

Reason to include them in your club:	
How can the community benefit:	
Twelve month engagement:	
Act now:	



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