



Leo Club **Starter Guide**



Lions International



Get to **know** the Leo Club Program

With more than 7,700 Leo clubs in approximately 150 countries around the world, Leos are a vibrant, highly motivated part of Lions International. Through the Leo Club Program, young people develop and practice leadership, organization and social skills through participation in Leo club activities and service projects. Involvement in these activities helps foster a lifetime commitment to serving others, while enhancing the community.

An inspiring history

In 1957, the Glenside Lions Club from the state of Pennsylvania in the U.S. sponsored the world's first Leo club — the Abington High School Leo Club — with 35 students. A decade later, the Lions Clubs International Board of Directors adopted the Leo Club Program as an official program of the association.

The Leo motto

The Leo motto is simple, yet powerful: “Leadership, Experience, Opportunity.” These three words are what Leo members will discover and develop as they move forward in their service journey.

Leadership

Leos can develop skills as a project organizer, time manager and team leader.

Experience

They will see firsthand how teamwork can bring positive changes to the community.

Opportunity

Leo membership offers the opportunity to create lifelong connections and make a lasting impact through community service.

Sponsor a Leo club

Make a difference

When you sponsor a Leo club, you can bring new energy to your Lions club while providing leadership and service opportunities for young people in your area. A Leo club can increase your club's visibility within the community through exposure to new audiences. And by sponsoring a Leo club, Lions get the opportunity to mentor future community leaders and recruit future Lions club members.

The sponsoring Lions club should guide and motivate Leos involved in the program. By working closely with Leos, Lions ensure that their sponsored Leo club operates within and benefits from the policies of Lions International.

Before starting a Leo club, the sponsoring Lions club members should ensure they have all of the following:

- Support from members of the Lions club
- Willingness and time to commit to the program long term
- A current member to serve as the Leo club advisor
- Good financial standing to support the annual Leo club levy
- An understanding of and willingness to follow relevant child safety regulations
- Openness to new ideas and different approaches to service

It's also important that the sponsoring Lions club guides the Leo club in the following ways, as agreed upon by both the Leo and the Lions club.

- The Leo club advisor or a member of the sponsoring Lions club should attend each Leo club and Leo board of directors meeting.
- Lions should review board meeting minutes given by Leos.



Understanding club types and tracks

Whether based in the community or a school, Leo clubs provide members with the connections and growth that come from participation in community service projects, social functions and leadership development activities. The sponsoring Lions club should understand the types of clubs available to Leos, as well as the age ranges for Leo club members, so that they can best support their Leos.

Types of Leo clubs

Community-based

These Leo clubs offer membership to any eligible young person within the local area of the Lions club, with a member of the sponsoring Lions club serving as the Leo club advisor. These clubs meet at a suitable location in the community, though they can meet virtually or have a hybrid meeting schedule.

School-based

These types of Leo clubs are formed in conjunction with a local school and often require a faculty advisor — usually a teacher, counselor or school administrator — to act as a liaison between the school and the Leo club. The faculty advisor also assists the Leo club advisor, who is a member of the sponsoring Lions club.

The school must agree to fulfill Leo Club Program responsibilities, and both the Leo and the Lions club must agree to follow the policies, insurance requirements and regulations of the school. The Leo club is subject to the same rules established by the school authorities for all student organizations and extracurricular activities.

Before the Leo club is organized, the Lions club and school should agree on procedures for organizing club activities on and off school property, which adhere to school policies and Lions Clubs International board policy. These clubs typically meet at the school, though they can also meet virtually or have a hybrid meeting schedule.



Leo club tracks

Leo clubs are also divided into two tracks — Alpha and Omega.

Alpha Leo clubs

This track is designated for youth between 12 and 18 years old and focuses on the individual and social development of preteens and teens.

Omega Leo clubs

This track is for young people between 18 and 30 years old. Omega Leo clubs are designed to help young adults grow personally and professionally.

Leo club advisor

The Leo club advisor is critical to the club's success, as they help set the tone for the club and provide guidance for the club's leaders. Advisors are Lions appointed by the sponsoring Lions club, and are responsible for mentoring the Leo club officers, ensuring the administrative management of the club — including reporting members, service activities, bank accounts and overseeing club activities. Advisors also help to set the membership growth goals along with the Leo club's board of directors.

Choosing the right Leo club advisor

The right Leo club advisor can ensure success for your Leo club. When choosing a Leo club advisor, it's important to consider appointing someone who

- Enjoys working with young people.
- Is flexible and open to new ideas.
- Has the time and ability to attend all Leo club meetings and trainings when needed.
- Can establish a positive, collaborative relationship with young people.



Financial obligation

Leo club organization fee

The Leo club organization fee is US\$100, but may be more depending on the size of your club. You can find more information on Leo club finances in the Leo Fees: Organization and Levies resource.

This one-time fee includes

- The costs involved in processing the Leo Club Organization Report
- A certificate of organization
- A Leo club officer kit
- A Leo club sponsor kit
- Leo lapel pins

The association issues an annual Leo levy/fee to all Lions clubs that sponsor a Leo club. Each Lions club sponsoring a Leo club will receive an annual billing of US\$100. If you have more than 200 Leos in your club, there will be additional costs on top of the standard fee.

If a Leo club is canceled, the Leo Club Termination Form must be received by the Young Lions and Leos Department at Lions International by October 31 to receive levy credit for the current year only. You can find the termination form at lionsclubs.org/lion-officers-supporting-leos.

Organize a Leo Club

A Leo club's success depends on the active involvement of Lions and the Leo club advisor. Once a Lions club chooses to sponsor a Leo club, it should follow these steps to officially organize the new club.

Advertise the club and identify potential Leos

Once you've determined your club type, its track and a Leo club advisor, market the new club opportunity to your community through your Lions network and on social media. Take note of the names of potential Leos from schools, universities, colleges, houses of worship, youth groups, friends and relatives.

Invite prospective Leos to an informational meeting

Use social media, local news and notices to invite young people to an informal meeting to spread the word about and garner interest for the new Leo club. Share the benefits and the opportunities of joining the Leo Club Program and answer questions about requirements for Leo club membership. Consider inviting Leos from other clubs to share their experiences and what they've learned being a Leo.

During the meeting, hand out the Alpha or Omega Leo club membership application, found at lionsclubs.org/start-leo-club, and invite interested youth to join the Leo club.

Host a formation meeting

Organize a Leo club formation meeting to formally accept the Leo Club Constitution and Bylaws, elect Leo club officers, determine club meeting times and locations and discuss potential projects. Officers include president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, membership chairperson and three additional board members. Officers should be given an overview of their role prior to the meeting, which you can find at lionsclubs.org/lead-next-generation.

Complete required paperwork

Fill out the Leo Club Organization Report found at lionsclubs.org/start-leo-club and collect the proper signatures needed, then submit the form to leo@lionsclubs.org. The new Leo club application can also be submitted in the Lion Portal at lionportal.org. Once received, the certification process can take four to six weeks to finalize.

After the club is created, the Leo club advisor or sponsoring Lions club must report all Leo club members in the Lion Portal. All reported Leo club members will have access to a Lion Portal account, where they can view their service. The Leo club president and secretary will receive special access allowing them to report members and service activities.

Plan an installation ceremony

After the Leo Club Organization Report form has been approved, the sponsoring Lions club should organize a meeting to present the Certificate of Organization, install Leo club officers and officially launch the Leo club with an initiation ceremony. Be sure to invite the following people for the biggest impact:

- Lions club members
- Leo club members' parents
- School and/or community representatives
- Lions and Leo district officers, district/multiple district Leo chairpersons
- Local media representatives

Support your new Leo club

Once you've gotten all the logistics of starting a new Leo club sorted, you may still have some questions. Don't worry — there are resources available to help you help your new Leos thrive.

- **Leo Club Sponsor Kit** – Contains helpful resources, like the Leo Club Program Handbook, FAQs, award certificates and much more to help set you up for success. The kit is automatically shipped once your club is formed.
- **Board Policy Manual** – Outlines policy surrounding all aspects of Lions Clubs International, including the Leo Club Program. Visit lionsclubs.org/board-policy to learn more.
- **Lions Supporting Leos webpage** – Features background on Leos, role descriptions for Lions supporting Leos, helpful resources and more. Visit lionsclubs.org/getting-started-supporting-leos to get started.

And if you have additional questions, reach out to leo@lionsclubs.org.





Need more information?

Learn more about the Leo Club Program at www.lionsclubs.org/leos

Young Lions and Leos Department

300 W. 22nd Street
Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842 USA
+1 630 571 5466
leo@lionsclubs.org