



## SPECIALTY CLUB PROGRAM

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What is the Specialty Club Program?

The Specialty Club Program is a new club development resource enhancing and expanding support for Lions' clubs with specialized interests and/or like-minded members. This program focuses on developing clubs that are based on a special characteristic that binds its members together. For example, prospective members who are connected by a similar profession, cause, ethnicity or life events, such as early retirees.

***Specialty clubs and club branches are chartered in the same way as traditionally developed, community-based clubs. New club approvals and policy-based organizational requirements must be met.*** During the application process, a club choosing to identify a specialty category will have the option to do so.

#### 2. Why is LCI rolling out this initiative?

By accepting new and unique club models, the Specialty Club program will help expand our membership base, enabling the organization to meet the needs of volunteers with diverse backgrounds and interests. Specialty clubs can also help LCI to achieve its service goals. In 2016-2017, we served 113 million people, and by 2021, our goal is to serve 200 million people a year. Building our membership through specialty clubs will help us reach these goals.

#### 3. How long will the program run?

The program was approved to run for a 3-year period: July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. LCI officially launched the Specialty Club program in August, 2017.

#### 4. How can my district and/or club help with building a specialty club?

Great question. Identify and network with groups that already meet in your community. Inform them about the unique culture that comes from belonging to a specialized Lions club, and that allows them to come together over shared interests, backgrounds, experience, etc. As you identify groups, encourage the development of specialty clubs to respond to local needs.

#### 5. Are specialty clubs located in every constitutional area?

Yes, each constitutional area is working on building specialty clubs. In fact, many already exist from years past, but were simply not identified in LCI's records.

#### 6. What is the role of the coordinators?

Specialty club coordinators are Lions passionate about the creation of specialty clubs. The position of specialty club coordinator was created to help drive club development and support the new club growth goals set annually by districts. Specialty club coordinators may work within or outside of his or her constitutional area (with approval) to develop clubs.

#### 7. How can I become a specialty club coordinator?

We are always looking for Lions who want to serve their communities. Specialty club coordinators must complete an application and detail how they will charter three new clubs and/or add 100 new members. Membership Development staff will review their application and, if approved, will provide coordinators with a development plan form and resources to track expenses.

Specialty club coordinators are required to create and submit strategic development plans identifying the specialty and location of prospective new clubs. Plans are reviewed and approved by districts and by LCI staff as a pre-requisite of expense reimbursement. Specialty club coordinators are reimbursed for eligible expenses up to \$2,000 in their constitutional areas and up to \$5,000 (with approval) for efforts outside of their constitutional areas.

**Note:** Lions actively serving as district governor cannot serve simultaneously as a specialty club coordinator.

**8. What type of specialty clubs are being developed? Here are some examples but not limited too:**

- **Common Interest Clubs** – Clubs that are comprised of members who share similar experiences, hobbies or cultural connections.
- **Sports Clubs** – Clubs whose members enjoy sports or support local athletes or sport-minded groups while making community service part of their agenda.
- **Clubs for Early Retirees** – Over the last 20 years, we are seeing groups of individuals that have retired from business after selling their companies. These prospective members are looking for ways to contribute to society.
- **Cause-Focused Clubs** – There are many important causes around the world that need our attention: environment, diabetes and refugee crisis. These clubs combine passion with personal interest for an immediate return on helping others.
- **Other** – There may be common interest groups already gathering in the community, such as young professionals or people who worship at the same place.

**9. Do specialty club coordinators need to work with the existing District Governor/GMT structure to develop new clubs?**

Yes. Since this is a three-year initiative, appointees will work closely with district leaders and the GMT structure at different levels. In addition, progress will be tracked by the specialty clubs international chairperson.

**10. What does it cost to apply for a charter to become a self-standing Lions club?**

Generally, to charter a new club, Lions Clubs International charter fees are US\$35 per member, with a minimum of 20 charter members. This means that club charter fees are approximately US\$700 for a new club with 20 members. However, there are situations such as student, Leo/Lion, or Lioness/Lion which offer discounts or waivers. Please refer to Board Policy for details on these opportunities.

**11. Are specialty club activities covered under LCI's liability insurance?**

Yes, as a benefit to our Lions conducting service activities, LCI provides liability coverage.

**12. Can we start off with a Specialty Club Branch and then convert later on to a self-standing Lions club?**

Yes. The three things to consider are: where the branch will be located, the type of members and what the focus of the specialty branch will be. However, it is totally acceptable for a branch to never convert to a self-standing club. In addition, there is value in a traditional club having a specialty club branch in order to allow more people in their community to get involved in Lions.

**13. What does it cost to form a Club Branch?**

The entrance fee for each new branch member is US\$35. There is no fee for members of a parent club who wish to transfer into the club branch of the parent club where they are a member.

**14. What are the annual dues of Lions Clubs International?**

The annual international dues are US\$43. The dues support our many programs, services to clubs, legal and trademark services, public relations and a global website/social media platforms, liability insurance for clubs and the LION magazine. Local dues are established by the club and the Lions District that they are part of for administrative needs for local publications and operations.

**15. What is Lions Clubs International like today?**

We are a diverse organization of over 1.4 million, bringing people together in the spirit of volunteerism from all walks of life. We provide opportunities to serve for many age groups, for women and men. LCI sees specialty clubs as one way to support today's volunteers and attract prospective members from a wide spectrum of experiences, backgrounds, and personal and professional goals.

**Questions?** Email [specialtyclubs@lionsclubs.org](mailto:specialtyclubs@lionsclubs.org)