

The Hitchhiker's Guide to Lions Membership: 26-M4 Edition

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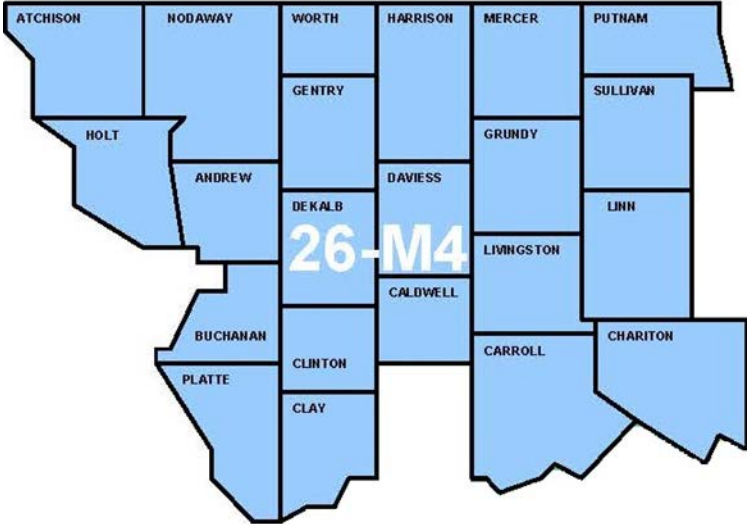


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About Lions Clubs

Lions International

Lions Clubs International is the largest service organization in the world. With 1.4 million members on every continent, the motto of “We Serve” has spread far and wide. Since 1917, Lions Clubs have worked to support and strengthen their communities.

Multiple District 26 – Missouri

Lions Clubs International Multiple District 26 (MD26) is the Lions designation for the whole of Lions and their clubs located in Missouri. The State of Missouri is split into seven Lions districts: M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, and M7.

District 26-M4

Lions Clubs International District 26-M4 is the Lions designation for Northwest Missouri. Geographically speaking, M4 covers the area from the Iowa border to North Kansas City/KCI Airport and from the Kansas border to around the midway point of the state. This district covers the counties of Atchison, Nodaway, Worth, Harrison, Mercer, Putnam, Holt, Andrew, Gentry, DeKalb, Davies, Grundy, Sullivan, Buchanan, Clinton, Caldwell, Livingston, Linn, Platte, Clay, Carroll, and Chariton. In this area there are 55 Lions Clubs that are home to 1,129 Lions, as well as a Leo Club for young Lions in Brookfield.

Things You’ll Hear About

Acronyms

LCI	Lions Clubs International
LCIF	Lions Clubs International Foundation
CA	Constitutional Area
MD	Multiple District
ID	International Director
PID	Past International Director
CC	Council Chair
PCC	Past Council Chair
DG	District Governor
PDG	Past District Governor
GAT	Global Action Team
GLT	Global Leadership Team Coordinator

GMT	Global Membership Team Coordinator
GST	Global Service Team Coordinator
VDG	Vice District Governor
DGE	District Governor Elect
CCE	Council Chair Elect
GPLLI	Great Plains Lions Leadership Institute
CoG	Council of Governors

Meetings

Lions can attend many, many meetings. You have club meetings, but that is just the beginning. There are also district cabinet meetings, district committee meetings, Council of Governors' Meetings (state/multiple-district level), state/multiple-district committee meetings, and many, many others depending on how involved you want to be. It is worth noting here that you cannot vote or make motions as a regular Lion at all of these meetings (there will be more on these subjects later on). Now, you will ask, "Why should I go if I cannot vote or make motions?" The simple answer is because you pay dues, which grants you access to all these meetings. The more complex answer is because you still have a voice. What does that mean? If there is a subject being spoken on and you feel it should not be entertained, speak up. There is a time for discussion that is open and your information might be what needs to be heard. Just because YOU cannot vote or move at that meeting, does not mean you are invalid. Someone who can vote or move may need to hear what you have to say on the matter to make up their mind. This is not always the case, but you have the right.

Conventions

Conventions are a major part of the Lions decision making process – matters of grave concern are weighed, like whether to raise or stand, or whether to draw or spit in the ocean. Conventions are where new Lions leaders are elected, Constitutions & By-Laws changed, and Lions who have passed during the year are honored. If you can attend one thing aside from your club meetings, make it a convention. Now, as you have heard time and again in this guide, there are levels. So, in the words of Mario, "Here We Go!" There are district, state/multiple-district, and international. Conventions are a great way to meet other Lions on the level you are attending. And they are a great spot for a social – there might even be sushis and shasimis.

Forums

Forums are like mini conventions. There are Lions from all over the area and there is usually some sort of training. The two forums you will hear about in this area are the Missouri Lions Mid-Winter Forum and the USA-Canada Lions Forum. The Mid-Winter Forum is generally only Missouri Lions, while the USA-Canada is Lions from two nations. There are different focus areas each year, so keep a lookout for info on these throughout the year.

Things You'll See

Shirts

Club Level

At the club level, shirts can come in as much variety as you can imagine. The reason is that clubs are individual creations. Some have polos, some tees. Some are red, some blue, some yellow. Nevertheless, all will know what club you represent when you wear the club shirt.

Multiple District Level

The multiple district is a bit different when it comes to shirts. You see, there have been multiple district shirts for regular Lions to purchase to denote they are Missouri Lions. However, there are also Missouri Lions parade polos, as well as, polos for each Council of Governors' class. Now, the Governors choose their own that is denoted as a business casual dress attire. You should be able to tell which class someone served with by their polo, which is kind of interesting when you want to find someone to talk with at a casual event like a hospitality night.

Other Lions Shirts

Aside from the specific shirts mentioned before, there are many fashionable/specialty shirts available. Lions Clubs International has a store with many of these things available, plus accessories to pair. Of course, if none strikes your fancy, there are authorized dealers that can custom make you a shirt, jacket, or whatever. Just make sure they are authorized to use the Lions Clubs logo!

Vests

Vests are a strange animal. Some clubs swear by them while other scorn and detest them. I think it depends on the vest and what you wear it to. Generally, you will receive a vest with your induction into a Lions Club, unless that club does not do that. Then you can order one from International or an authorized dealer. Also, as with the shirts, vests can be customized to the wearer's desire.

Blazers

Blazers are part of the business attire for the Council Governors classes. They may be viewed, by some, as the most important part. The class decides when they begin their 3-year term what color blazer they will wear for the next 3 years, and generally, they all order them from the same manufacturer to ensure they match. A lot of work for conformity, huh? Well, even I will admit it looks impressive when a whole class is together in their matching blazers. It is especially eye catching when they wear hunter's orange.

Lions Pins

There are so many pins that even I can't wear all that I have. For the most part, we just play Pin the Tail on the Lion or Lion Pin Cushion with them. I doubt you believe that, but it was worth a shot! The point is, pins are interesting as some come in sets, some are single, some earned, some given, and even traded.

Membership Pin

The Lions' Membership pin is by far the most important pin you have. Yeah, I know, it's the first one you get, and others are fancier and more expensive, but without this pin, none of the others can happen. Arguably, without the membership pin, no other pin matters. Always wear your membership pin to higher Lions functions, you may get fined if you don't – so, fair warning.

Club Pins

Not all clubs have a specific pin, but the basic thought here is to show what club you represent. If you are wondering, "With the shirts, vests, and hats, how would someone NOT know where I'm from?" Well, if you are a DG or VDG, you will be in business or business casual and not regular club attire at certain functions, therefore, if you have a club pin, you can still rep your club while looking the part.

100% Attendance

This one is self-explanatory. Your club has a number of meetings that count as 100% attendance. You attend that number; you get a pin that says you attended the required number for an award. Easy peasy. This is legitimately the easiest of pins to get.

Longevity Pins

These pins are an award presented to Lions at years of service milestones. So, once you are a Lion for an amount of years, International sends you a pin with a special message signed by the International President.

District Governor's Pin

These pins are specially designed by each Governor and given to individuals who they believe exemplify what they are trying to accomplish and to the officers who make up the district cabinet.

Officer Pins

Officer pins are not always used. They are used to denote what position you hold.

International Pins

International Pins is a broad term, but I am basically lumping any pin from outside your country that you may see or acquire (usually trade for). These can be other club pins, other Governors' pins, International Directors' pins, etc.

International President's Pin

Above and beyond the International Pins, there is the International President's Pin. This pin is generally given to noteworthy individuals as a sign of respect and an acknowledgement from the International President. In a way, these are almost an award in and of themselves. So, you either did something incredible while an IP was present, the IP has heard of your excellent deeds in Lions, or you knew who to ask to get one!

Name Badges

This shows your name... What did you think it was, a decoder?

Banners

Banners are a fun bit. There are club, district, multiple district, and other large banners. However, there are also smaller banners, sometimes called "friendship banners" that are created by individuals, usually Governors or higher and are given as a token of friendship between two people. These are also taken to the International Convention and traded as a show of friendship between Lions nations. If you are able to get one, especially a current one, count yourself lucky!

Patches

Patches denote achievements and statuses. Usually, patches go on banners for a variety of accomplishments: membership growth, retention, meeting an initiative milestone, etc. If you see one on an article of clothing, it is generally a fashionable Lions logo, or an area designation; for instance, the Governors of Missouri wear a patch on their blazers of the Missouri Lions emblem.

Lion Tamer and Tail Twisters

The Lion Tamer is the Lion designated to make sure the Lions meeting equipment is set out correctly, and then stored correctly. "Correctly" is a term subjective to each club. The Tail Twisters are a little more involved. Tail Twisters, especially in clubs that are more traditional and in district or higher levels, are given the power to fine members for any infractions of Lions decorum, as well as, bring fun and joy into meetings. Some have gotten carried away with the fine aspect, but in their defense, they were trying to have fun and raise some funds for a special cause.

Technology

Lions Websites

The Lions Clubs organization has a few website that you can visit for various informations. The most useful sites in this area are, lions26m4.org (your district site), missourilions.org (the multiple district or Missouri site), and lionsclubs.org/en (the English version of Lions International site). Some clubs have their own full websites

or a webpage through Lions International's e-clubhouse program, but most just have Facebook or other social media, if they have any at all.

Lions Social Media

Lions social media is spread out and sometimes sporadic. Some clubs have one social media account, some have more, some have none. The best advice I have on finding them is to just search for "Lions Club" on whichever social media you want to follow. It is worth mentioning that Lions International has their own pseudo social media through MyLion, which will be covered more a little later.

Lions and You

Things You Have Access To

When you pay dues to Lions International, you gain access to many features and abilities.

Technology

Websites

Once you register with Lions International after becoming a member and activate your Lion Account, you can access the Lions' technology suite comprised of: MyLCI (if you are also an officer), MyLion, Insights, Learn, and Shop.

MyLCI

If you are also an officer of your club, district, multiple district, or higher, you have access to MyLCI which is for administrative duties like, assigning officers, editing members, viewing reports, etc.

MyLion

The MyLion for web is the newer platform for reporting the service and other activities you are involved with.

Insights

Insights is Lions International by the numbers. An overview of the whole of Lions broken down by different areas.

Learn

Learn is online resource for finding trainings in the many levels of Lions.

Apps

The only "app" to speak of is the MyLion mobile app. This is the mobile version of MyLion for web and includes the ability to message other members who also have the app.

Meetings

You are welcome to attend any meetings and are encouraged to visit other clubs, as well as, come to district and state meetings.

Things You Can Do

It would be important to note here that there is a document called Constitution & By-Laws on each level of Lions, usually there is also a Policy Manual for each level as well. These documents line out how each level of Lions is constructed and also who can do what. I would encourage, strongly, that you search for these documents and read them for yourself. If you are not sure if something is allowed, "put your nose in the book and find something Lucas!"

Motions

On the club level, any Lion in their club, may move to or to not do something. Motions needs seconds to be able to be discussed then voted on. To begin, a Lion would say, "I move we do or not do something." A second Lion

would respond, "I second that motion." The meeting leader will call for discussion, then call for all in favor to say "Aye" or raise their hands, then call for the nays in the same manner, after which the speaker will announce the result. It is important to note, if you are visiting another club, you do not make motions nor vote. This is the same for when you are visiting a district other than your own. It is important to note at the district level, to make motions and vote on them, you must be a member of the district cabinet.

Voting

In the last section, I mentioned voting on a motion, which is voting type number 1. Voting type number 2 is by written secret ballot. This type happens at the district, multiple district, and international levels, and is for amendments to the Constitution & By-Laws, electing executive officers, and to select venues for future conventions. To vote on these matters, you must be a delegate of your club and be a member in good standing.

Find Your Niche

In conclusion, I hope you find this guide useful and informative. However, keep in mind, your Lions journey is just beginning. Now, it is up to you to find your niche. Find something you are passionate about and get involved if Lions has an area for it or create an area if there is none. There will be those that try to put you in a place you don't want to be in, it is okay to say, "Hefty no thank you!" Just remember two things: 1) Lions is not one person or group, but many who all work together; 2) everything that follows is a result of what you see here.