



DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIRPERSON'S GUIDE

This guide for district public relations chairpersons is to be used in conjunction with the "Club Public Relations Chairperson Guide" (PR-710). Both publications are available to download from the "Resources" section of Lions Web site at www.lionsclubs.org.

Your Role

As the district public relations chairperson, you have five primary objectives that will enable you to enhance the image and awareness of Lions in your area and of the international organization:

- **Train** club public relations chairpersons on their role and use of public relations (PR) tools
- **Coordinate** district media relations and act as spokesperson
- **Promote** official visits by the district governor to clubs and visits of international officers and directors
- **Oversee** district publications and Web site
- **Encourage** a positive image and pride in membership



Your Responsibilities

Train

Conduct a PR seminar early in your term to motivate club chairpersons to develop a PR plan, calendar of events and timeline for publicizing each. Emphasize the importance of all Lions activities. (See section on "Organizing a Public Relations Seminar.")

Coordinate

Determine early in your term, such as at the PR seminar, the best way to communicate with the club chairpersons throughout the year. Collect e-mail, phone, fax and mailing addresses. Organizing this information will allow you to expedite delivery of material on district programs and PR tips, providing for open communication with the club chairpersons throughout the year.

Prepare news releases and encourage media coverage of districtwide events, including the district convention. Send a fact sheet and sample release to the club chairpersons to encourage them to distribute the information to their local publications.

Act as spokesperson on district projects and programs as you promote them with the media. Or have in place key people, such as the district governor or a committee chairperson, to speak about projects and activities.

Track the coverage of district events by maintaining a file or scrapbook of the clippings. Share results with club and district members to emphasize the importance of PR. Consider having a booth to display positive media coverage and information on district events at the district and/or multiple district convention. Keeping members informed builds pride in membership.

Final Seminar Preparation

Once the program content, speakers and location are determined, there are other details to attend to:

- **Agenda** – Prepare an agenda (see example) with the day's events, times, location, speakers and topics. Distribute agenda in advance to all speakers.
- **Invitations** – Send an invitation to the list of club public relations chairpersons at least three weeks in advance. Be sure to include the seminar time, location and instructions on any materials to bring (note paper, *Club Public Relations Chairperson's Guide* (PR-710), etc.). Include a copy of the agenda. Ask that each notify you by phone or e-mail if they are able to attend. Follow up the week prior to the seminar with those you have not heard from. Also, consider sending a "reminder" to attendees of the date and time by e-mail or by phone.
- **Materials** – Have pens and paper available for note taking. If your speakers have given you handouts to share, make copies to distribute. You may want to assemble them all into a binder or folder so they are easy to reference and distribute. You may want to include sample releases, public service announcements, etc. that are in the back of PR-710. Have extra copies of the *Club Public Relations Chairperson's Guide* (PR-710) and/or refer attendees to the Resources section of Lions Web site at www.lionsclubs.org to download a copy.
- **Name Tags** – Provide self-stick name tags at the registration table for attendees to write their name and club name on.
- **Speech Preparation** – Practice your presentation so you are comfortable with the material and flow, without reading from notes.

Day of Seminar

Arrive early to check the room. See that the following have been done:

- Appropriate number of tables and chairs are set up and in the configuration you desired.
- Set out materials on registration table.
- Meet with the facility's audio-video technician to test all equipment to ensure it is working properly and you will be able to demonstrate it to the speakers. Cue any videotape so it is ready to play. Know how and whom to contact if there is a problem.
- Make sure the room is set at a comfortable temperature.
- Check that water and glasses are set out.

Seminar Evaluation/Follow-Up

Provide an evaluation form for attendees to complete at the close of the seminar. Allow time in the schedule for it to be completed. Feedback will allow for future planning and areas that you, as district public relations chairperson, may want to address in correspondence with the club chairpersons throughout the year.

Also, ask the club chairpersons to provide their name, phone, fax and e-mail information to ensure the receipt of future correspondence through their preferred method of contact. Plan to send a communication at least once each quarter and more timely updates and reminders as necessary. Utilize other district resources (Web site, newsletter, district convention) to reach members.

Send a thank-you note to speakers expressing appreciation for their time, preparation and contribution to the seminar's success.



Promote

Promote official visits of association officers in your district. Your district governor is the highest-ranking representative of the international association most Lions will meet. Provide each club that the district governor visits with a news release and photo in advance of the governor's arrival. Coordinate efforts with the club public relations chairperson to provide local newspapers with these items to promote the governor's visit and boost the club's image within the community.

Use materials sent to the district governor from International Headquarters to promote visits of international officers and directors. Biographical information, a photograph, the flag and anthem of your visitor's country (if different from your own) and the official protocol of the association are sent to the district governor when visits are scheduled through the Travel and Administrative Service Department at International Headquarters. The biography and photo may also be accessed directly from the Lions Web site at www.lionsclubs.org under "International Leaders." Use the material to promote the leader's visit with local media and club members. Spotlight local membership and programs in media materials while tying in international programs and membership figures to broaden the understanding of what Lions do, not only locally, but also around the world.

Oversee

As district public relations chairperson you may be responsible for writing, editing and producing all district newsletters. Or, the governor may prefer to prepare his/her own newsletter and ask committee chairpersons to do the same. In this case, you should offer to proofread the publications for spelling and grammar errors, review clarity of content and ensure design is attractive and readable.

Similarly, you may be responsible for maintaining the district Web site. If not, check with the responsible party and review the material to ensure its accuracy. Use this valuable tool in communicating district news and list it as a source for more information in your media material. It is important that the site be maintained and regularly updated to keep information timely, especially when distributing the Web address to the media. Listing your district Web site through LionNet will expand the visibility of the site. (Learn more at www.lionnet.com.)

You may be also asked to create or proofread district promotional materials such as posters, flyers or news releases.

Encourage

Share success stories by distributing media clips, maintaining a scrapbook or developing a display for district and multiple district conventions. Keeping leaders and members informed will help build upon success and create pride in membership. Everyone likes to see his/her name, club name, activity, etc. in print or to hear it on the radio or television.

Also, encourage members to practice the following that are often taken for granted:

- Project a positive attitude
- Wear the Lions lapel pin
- Ensure Lions signs posted in the community are in good condition and maintained.





Organizing a PR Seminar

Developing a comprehensive PR seminar is the first step in ensuring that your club chairpersons are well informed and prepared for the year ahead. You can instill confidence in their skills by providing the appropriate tools and resources. The seminar is also a time to communicate specific and timely information on developments of local projects and activities.

Getting Started

Contact your district governor to see if there is a regular time and place for training club officers and chairpersons, or to determine the most appropriate time and budget. If there is a district conference or convention early in the Lions year, that may be the time to hold PR training. If coordinating with the time of an existing event, contact the responsible party for permission to include the seminar and to make arrangements for a room at the facility and use of any equipment.

Keep the following in mind when you request the seminar space:

- The length of the seminar (overall length to be determined by content, approximately 1-1/2 – 4 hours)
- Expected number of attendees
- A podium and head table for speakers
- Arrangement of tables/chairs, a surface to allow for note taking
- Clear audio and visibility of speakers and screen for video or overhead presentation from all seats
- Location of table for registration, name tags and seminar material
- Availability of water for speaker and attendees.

Determine Seminar Content

Once a time and location are established, next determine the seminar's content. As district public relations chairperson, you should plan to moderate the seminar, as well as cover some of the material. Consider opening the seminar with a startling or attention-getting statement, fact or story (keep it relevant and appropriate for the audience). This is a good way to get the audience's attention and draw them into what you have to say.

An example of an attention-getting statement is:

One thousand Lions roam the streets of Milwaukee each day!... Imagine that they are all hungry; hungry to serve. One thousand Lions is the number of members in our district and if each one of us told someone about our organization each day, we would have 365,000 positive impressions about Lions made on the members of our community each year.

Selecting the Speakers

Here are some suggestions to get you started on determining the appropriate people to invite as speakers and topics to be covered. Consider inviting:

- The district governor or district representative to share information on the district's major programs. It is important for club chairpersons to understand how these programs relate to local initiatives so they can promote them in their local area.
- An editor or reporter from a local newspaper. Daily and weekly papers will have different needs, so you may want to invite someone from both. Ask them to tell chairpersons how they can provide relevant information, what is "relevant" to their audience, and the best format to submit it. What types of stories and photos are of interest to these publications? See if they can bring along a staff photographer to share tips on how to photograph an event/project to create visual interest.
- A broadcast representative (radio and television formats differ) to explain when each format is appropriate for your message and the difference between news and a public service announcement. Also, how to provide information to the station and who to direct it to.

- A public relations professional to share tips from the trade, sample PR tools and case studies of successful PR programs. A club public relations chairperson who has implemented a successful local PR campaign could also be asked to share tips and key learnings.
- Marketing communications, graphic design and printing company representatives to share information on design and production of a newsletter, flyer, Web site and other promotional tools.

Note: Ask around to see if there are professionals in the above fields who are Lions members. Contact them about being a speaker, or they may be able to put you in touch with others in their field and members of the media. Also, contact professional organizations for speakers (i.e. Public Relations Society of America – PRSA).

Once you have secured your speakers, it is important to communicate the seminar time and location, agenda and list of other presenters. Be sure all presenters are aware of the time they will be allotted to speak and overall format (will there be questions and answers following or incorporated into their speaking time). Ask the speakers to provide examples where appropriate and inform them of the number of attendees so they can bring the correct quantity of handouts. Or, ask them to provide the handouts to you in advance if you will be duplicating and organizing all material into one packet for the attendees. Confirm the speakers' audio-visual needs in advance so the room is equipped.

Organizing the Program

The speakers you invite and the content that you determine is relevant to your audience will determine the program. It is important to cover why public relations is valuable, tips and PR tools. Your goal should be to motivate the attendees and instill confidence as they set forth on their own PR plans.

Public Relations Seminar

Saturday, September 4
9 – 11:30 a.m.



- **Welcome/Introduction** (approximately 5 minutes)
 - Consider a startling or attention-getting statement, fact or story to open the seminar
 - Highlight what will be covered
 - Explain your role as district public relations chairperson
 - Introduce speakers, if they all arrive at the beginning of the seminar, or just the first speaker and segue into their presentation.
- **District Governor** (approximately 5-8 minutes)
- **Why PR is Important** (approximately 5 minutes)
- **Media** (approximately 15-20 minutes for each professional to speak)
- **Questions and Answers** (approximately 15-20 minutes)
- **Break** (approximately 15 minutes)
- **Promotional Materials** (approximately 15 minutes)
- **Keeping Your Club Informed** (approximately 5 minutes)
- **Support Materials** (approximately 3-5 minutes)
- **Group Discussion** (approximately 15-20 minutes)
- **Closing** (approximately 5 minutes)
 - Wrap up the main points from the day
 - Provide your contact information
 - Close with the action you want the attendees to take.

December

Sample PR Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Plan program to honor local Peace Poster winner(s)	2	3	4	5 International Leo Day	6
7	8 Deadline for January District newsletter: Promote Glaucoma Awareness Month, LCIF Week and Melvin Jones Birthday	9 Update calendar on district Web site for dates of next year's events	10	11	12	13
14	15 Multiple district Peace Poster entry due to International Headquarters – photograph entry before submitting for PR purposes	16	17	18 Submit news release to local newspapers of district Peace Poster winner and to Lions clubs for their publications	19	20
21	22 Prepare for LCIF Week in January	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Suggested Dates to Promote

Check to see if your area celebrates these events or others. Actual dates may vary from year-to-year. Visit the "Calendar of Events" section on Lions Web site at www.lionsclubs.org for yearly updates and additions to the calendar. Also, add local & district events to your calendar.

June/July

Lions Clubs International Convention
Election and Installation of new officers
June 1: Helen Keller Day
June 5: World Environment Day
Deaf-Blind Awareness Week (last week of June)

August/September

Plan activities for Lions World Sight Day in October
Deaf Awareness Week (last week of September)

October

Leo Membership Growth Month
International Relations Month
Lions World Sight Day (Second Thursday)
October 1: Deadline to purchase Peace Poster Contest kits from Club Supplies Sales at Lions International Headquarters
October 15: White Cane Safety Day (U.S.)
October 16: World Food Day
October 24: United Nations Day
October 31: Sight Night (U.S. & Canada)

November

Annual LCIF Contributing Member Month
Diabetes Awareness Month (U.S.)
November 15: Postmark deadline for a club to send one winning Peace Poster entry (per contest sponsored) to the district governor

December

December 1: World AIDS Day
December 1: Postmark deadline for a district governor to send one winning Peace Poster entry to the multiple district council chairperson
December 1: Postmark deadline for a district governor not belonging to a multiple district or a club not belonging to a district to send one winning Peace Poster entry to the Public Relations Department at International Headquarters

December 5: International Leo Day

December 15: Postmark deadline for a multiple district to send one winning Peace Poster entry to the Public Relations Department at International Headquarters

January

Glaucoma Awareness Month (USA)
LCIF Week (Week of January 13)
January 13: Melvin Jones' Birthday
January 24: World Peace Day

February

Past District Governors Honor Month
February 1: Peace Poster Contest winners will be notified on or before this date

March

District Governors Month
Save Your Vision Month (U.S.)
Eye Donor Awareness Month (U.S.)
March 22: Lions Day with the United Nations

April

Leo Club Awareness Month
National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Month (U.S.)
April 7: World Health Day
April 16-18: National Youth Service Days/Global Youth Service Days
April 17: Worldwide Induction Day

May

Lions Recycle for Sight Month
Lions Family Month
Better Hearing and Speech Month (U.S.)
May 1: Deadline for International Friendship Banner, Newsletter, Photography, PR Idea, Trading Pin and Web Site contest entries to be received at International Headquarters
May 4: Infant Hearing Awareness Day (U.S.)
May 16-22: White Cane Week (U.S.)