



Just Ask!

New Member Recruiting Guide for Clubs



Lions Clubs International



Introduction

Just Ask! is designed to guide your club through the process of recruiting new members and effectively managing club growth. The strength of your membership and the health of your club will determine your ability to do what all Lions are called to do—serve. So keep in mind that more members mean more service.

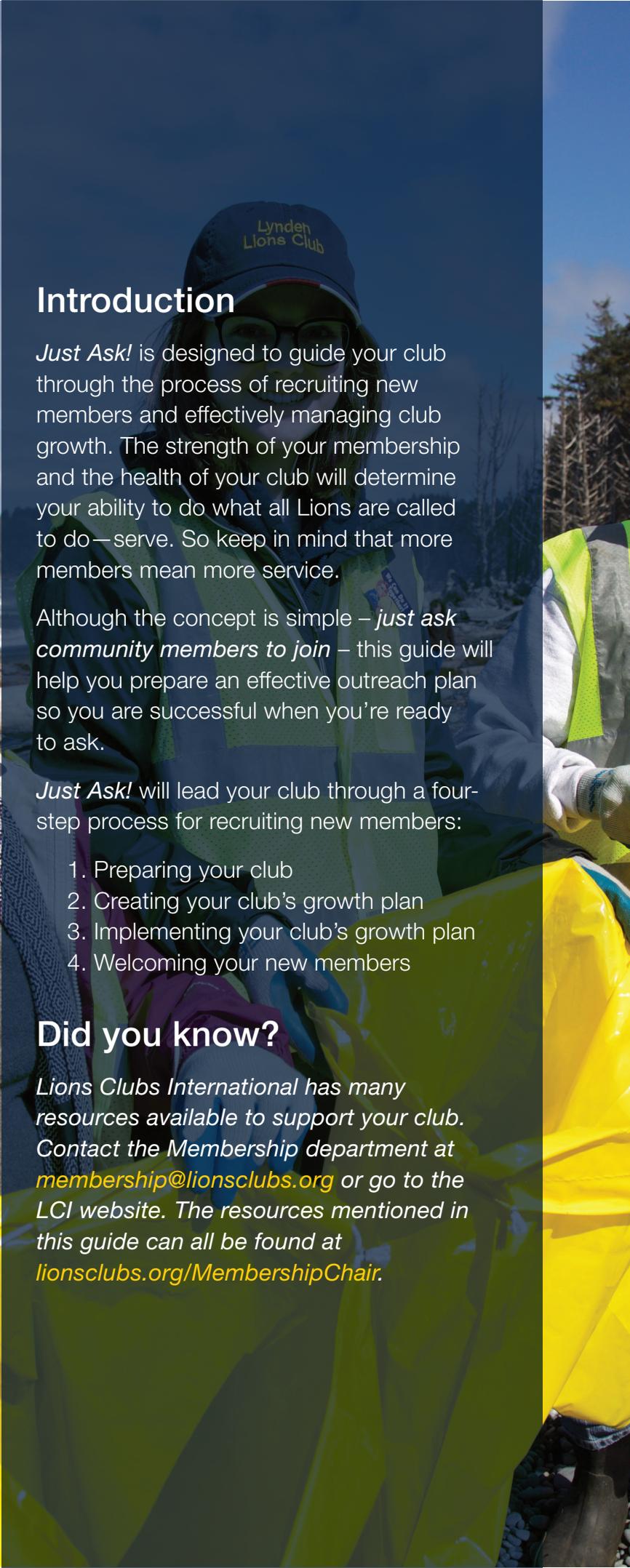
Although the concept is simple – *just ask community members to join* – this guide will help you prepare an effective outreach plan so you are successful when you're ready to ask.

Just Ask! will lead your club through a four-step process for recruiting new members:

1. Preparing your club
2. Creating your club's growth plan
3. Implementing your club's growth plan
4. Welcoming your new members

Did you know?

Lions Clubs International has many resources available to support your club. Contact the Membership department at membership@lionsclubs.org or go to the LCI website. The resources mentioned in this guide can all be found at lionsclubs.org/MembershipChair.



STEP 1:

Prepare Your Club

Use the results of the How Are Your Ratings? Survey and the Community Needs Assessment to answer the questions below.

1. Decide what you want your club to be.

- What does your club want to focus on?
 - What do your members want your club to be?
 - How do you envision your club next year? Five years from now?

2. Identify what you want your club to accomplish.

- What type of service projects does your club want to conduct?
- How often?
- Where?

3. Decide what your goals are.

Use the *Recruiting Goals* form in this guide to define your club membership goals. Be sure to consider how new members will fit in with your objectives.

- **Why does your club want new members?**

Before you begin inviting new members, it is important to identify why. The answer should be clear, tangible and relevant, not simply “for more service.” For example: “If we had 3 more members, we could pack 100 more lunches for the homeless each month.”

When you are recruiting new members, be sure to tell them what the club can accomplish with their help. This will help set clear expectations and will lead towards the satisfaction of those new members.
- **Who does your club want as new members?**

Are they younger members, women, community professionals, parents of Leos, family members or friends? Your club may have more than one target group. Keep in mind that when recruiting new members, it often works best to recruit a group of 2-4 people. Be sure that the target members align

with the work that you want to accomplish with your new members.

- **Who will help your club recruit?**

Although everyone in your club should be encouraged to help recruit new members, a membership development team should be selected to guide the recruitment effort. Use the *Membership Development Team* form in this guide to organize your team.

- **Each member has strengths and preferences.**

Make the most of these by encouraging your members to take on roles in the recruiting process. Important roles include:

- **Organizing** - Some members are planners; they see each step and can prioritize what needs to be done. These Lions should focus on guiding your club’s recruiting effort.
- **Promoting** - Tech-savvy and creative members can create brochures, issue your press releases, and update your website and social media networks.
- **Reaching out** - These are your Lions that like to talk, especially about your club. Encourage them to promote Lions to your target groups and get them on the phone with prospective new members.
- **Welcoming** - Lions who are trained to conduct new member orientation and coordinate mentoring will ensure your new members feel welcome and quickly settle into your club. LCI provides training for both orientation and mentoring.

⇒ **Assess your club and your community.**

To align your club activities with the needs of your members and community, consider these valuable options:

- Give your club members the How Are Your Ratings? survey. Member feedback can help identify your strengths and weaknesses, and determine what matters most to your members. This survey also allows you to discover little problems and correct them before they become big ones. Any issues within your club need to be addressed before bringing new members in.
- Conduct a Community Needs Assessment. This assessment will help you better identify unmet needs in the community, and determine which club projects and programs are important to the people you serve. Discovering new service opportunities can help you find potential new members and help explain why you need them.
- Participate in the Club Quality Initiative: The Club Quality Initiative (CQI) is a fun interactive workshop designed to help clubs align their efforts with the LCI Forward strategic plan. The CQI will help your club locate tools and resources in order to help it achieve its full potential through the four quadrants of the strategic plan: Improve Membership Value and Reach New Markets, Pursue Club District and Organizational Excellence, Enhance Service Impact and Focus and Reshape Public Opinion and Improve Visibility.



Step 2: Create Your Club's Growth Plan

In this step, you will create your club growth plan. Your Membership Chairperson should take the lead in creating the plan. Include target dates for completion and assign tasks to each goal. The Club Growth Plan form included in this guide can serve as a template.

Once your plan has been created, share it with your club members. Assign each task to specific Lions, and follow-up with them as needed to offer assistance and ensure the plan stays on schedule.

To help your club, this guide includes suggestions that have worked for other Lions clubs. Feel free to use some of these suggestions or come up with your own ideas.

Who will we recruit?

Identify groups associated with your club's target members. For the widest reach, ask all your members to help think of potential sources. Here are some additional tips:

- Consider using lists that have already been compiled. Look at organizations or businesses that share common interests with your Lions club.
- If you conducted a Community Needs Assessment, don't forget to ask your contacts to become involved.
- Hold a brainstorming session with your club members. Ask each member to write down the names of three businesses, groups or organizations that focus on the same areas in which your club does service.
- Use the Recruiting Wheel in the back of this guide to help your members think of people who may be interested in joining the club. Use the Build a Lions Network form in this guide to collect the information. Be sure any list includes either a physical address or email address, depending on your club's method of sending out invitations. Phone numbers are a plus for follow-up purposes.

- Make personal visits to local businesses and offices. Speak with the business owners or managers about their interest in joining, and ask for their permission to speak with their employees about joining. Use the conversation flowchart in the back of this guide for suggestions on how to invite members.

⇒ When you want to know something about a business or organization, most of the time you look at their website. What will people find on yours?

- Use the Club Locator tool on the LCI website to find your club. (If you don't have a link listed, make sure the club secretary has been given permission in MyLCI.) Click on your club's link. What does it look like? Is it informative? Easy to use? Does it represent your club well? Make sure target members find an attractive club website filled with current information, including meeting notices, a calendar of events and service project descriptions with pictures.

Where and when will we recruit?

Decide what recruiting activities best fit your club and community. The membership committee should take the lead in this area and prepare the materials to use. Here are some recruiting suggestions:

- Hold an informational meeting. Invite your target members and conduct a short prepared program to let people know what your club does and who they are. Serve light refreshments and be sure Lions are available to talk one-on-one or in small groups.
- Sponsor a community event or set up a booth at a special event. When recruiting at an event, prepare a standard 30 second to two minute speech about your club and its impact in the community for your members to use. If target members are interested in learning more, be sure to gather their contact information so you can follow up, and direct them to your club website or social networking sites so they can learn more. If you have an informational meeting scheduled, provide an invitation containing the location, date and time to those who show interest.
- Invite target members to a service project. Be sure to have Lions available at the project to speak with target members and answer questions, as well as providing service!

Visit the Lions Learning Center on the LCI website to find online communication training courses to support your recruitment efforts.

What materials will we recruit with?

Prospective members will want to see information about your club and the association. Before any active recruiting begins, make sure to update your club's website and any social media presence, and have current materials ready.

LCI offers a wide variety of recruiting materials that explain membership and talk about the association. Publications can be downloaded from the LCI website and print materials can be ordered via email by contacting LCI's Membership Department at membership@lionsclubs.org.

The website also offers customizable materials for clubs. You can download the Club Brochure Template or Be a Lion Brochure available at lionsclubs.org/MembershipChair and use them to create personalized materials for your club.



In addition to printed materials, it is important for your club to have an up-to-date online presence. Before attending an informational meeting or deciding to join, target members will search the Internet for information about your club.

If your club doesn't have a website, use the free [e-Clubhouse](#) tool to create one. The e-Clubhouse provides a preformatted website for even the least Internet savvy. It has a club home page with meeting information, calendar of events, club projects page, photo gallery and contact page. All your club needs to do is add your information. As your club gets more comfortable with e-Clubhouse, you can add more pages. Be sure the informational meeting is listed on your club's calendar!

If your club has any social networking presence, be sure to update those sites regularly and advertise the addresses. Be sure the informational meeting is promoted on these sites too and ask your members to include their club activities on their personal social networking pages.

For other ideas on how to invite new members and promote your club, check out the Membership Growth Event Toolbox, available at lionsclubs.org/MembershipChair.

How will we promote our informational meeting?

Informational meetings are intended for Lions and target members to meet and build interest in joining your Lions club.

- Ask each member of your club to bring one non-Lion to an informational meeting. Encourage your members by letting them know that the first person they ask might turn them down, but eventually someone will be interested.
- Use lists of target members to prepare invitations. Send invitations by postal mail or email. Be sure the invitations include your club's website and any social media sites. Make it clear that invitees are welcome to bring others who may be interested.
- If sending the invitation by postal mail, include RSVP information. Consider following-up by telephone if invitees don't reply.
- If sending the invitation by email, consider using a site that allows users to RSVP online. Also consider following-up by telephone if you don't receive replies.
- Consider placing an ad promoting your meeting in a local newspaper; or in a newsletter or magazine directed to your target members.

⇒ Tips for planning a great informational meeting:

- Hold the meeting at the same time and day your club normally meets.
- Serve light refreshments such as cookies and soft drinks, not a full meal.
- Have a short (one hour or less) prepared program focused on your club's goals. Be sure to give an overview of Lions activities and membership benefits. Emphasize your club and discuss its service, leadership development, networking and family involvement in your presentation.
- Use your program to create the agenda.
- Communicate the date, time and place of your regular meetings and let the target members know they are welcome to attend.
- Have members of your club available to speak one-on-one or in small groups while enjoying the refreshments.
- Fully explain the cost of joining your Lions club. Be sure to include international, multiple district, district and club dues and explain what the money pays for with each type of dues.

Step 3: Implement Your Club Growth Plan

Reach out to your target members

The outreach Lions should take the lead on this. When recruiting new members, it is important to ask them what they think is important when it comes to volunteering. Can your club fulfill their wishes and needs? If they are not the right fit for your club, perhaps a neighboring club would be a good fit. If not, consider having your club serve as a parent for a club branch that these new members would be able to work in, or helping them start a new club entirely.

There are many ideas for reaching out to target members. LCI has developed a script for recruiting, which is included in this guide. The script is most effective when it is adapted to your own personality and when you speak from the heart.

- When recruiting, always ask, “Has anyone asked you to join the Lions club?” If the answer is “no,” ask them if they are interested in giving back to or serving the community in some way and then talk about your club and its service. If the answer is “yes,” find out why they didn’t join and see if they are willing to try again or share the name of someone who might be interested.
- If you are making personal visits to local businesses and offices:
 - o Do not wait more than 10 minutes. Your time is best spent contacting multiple prospects. Instead, ask if there is a convenient time to meet.
 - o If asked what your visit is regarding, simply say that you are recruiting for a Lions club in your community and only need 3-5 minutes of the person’s time.

o Take clues from the offices. You can tell a lot about a person by looking at the décor on the walls of their office. Do they have a family, a hobby or a humanitarian interest? Often awards, pictures and other items in their office can provide such clues.

- Limit the materials you carry. Only bring invitations to the informational meeting or to a service project. Otherwise, the prospect may ask you to leave information for their review. However, if they are too busy to speak with you, are they likely to read the material? Explain that more materials will be available at the meeting. If you leave information, or if they would like time to consider it, get their contact information and follow up with them, in person preferably.
- Always be positive. Remember, you are providing the opportunity to change their lives, not selling a product! If prospects do not appear interested, thank them for their time, ask for a referral and move on. An irritated individual will not join and have only negative thoughts of Lions.

Host the informational meeting

Use the meeting to show your target members what is special about Lions and your Lions club.

Before the meeting:

- Call or email target members who indicated they would attend to remind them of the date, time and location. Remind them they are welcome to invite their friends, family or other community-minded individuals who might be interested in joining.
- Have an agreement from your board members that they are willing to accept the potential new members.

At this meeting:

- Set the room for fewer people than you have invited since a few “no-shows” are common. Have additional chairs available in case more people attend.
- Dress in a professional manner but do not wear a Lions vest or too many pins. Research shows these customs are better introduced as your new members are engaged in service activities. Club customs and traditions should be explained during new member orientation, not at the informational meeting.
- Personally welcome each participant.
- Start the meeting on time. The meeting should not last longer than 60 minutes.
- Follow your agenda as closely as possible.
- Explain to your target members what your club does and why you need them. It is best if you can show pictures or video from service projects. Talk about the outcome of your club’s projects and the impact they have had on people’s lives.
- Provide accurate estimates of the commitment of time and money to be a member of your club.
- Ask attendees to suggest new projects for your club. Ask them to think about what role they would like to take in these projects.
- Distribute Membership Applications, and if possible, collect them with the entrance fee before the target members leave the meeting.

Follow-up with meeting participants

Follow-up with any target members who attended the informational meeting but did not fill out a membership application.

Have your outreach Lions coordinate the follow-up. Be sure to assign someone to each name and request an update at the next meeting.

- Contact the participants to thank them for their time. Confirm their interest and invite them to attend your club’s next meeting or a service project. Encourage them to give you names of people they know who may be interested in joining the club.
- Make follow-up contact by phone, email or letter within 48 hours of the meeting.

Review your Club Growth Plan

Regularly review your goals and your schedule to ensure you are on track. Adjust the timeline and goals as necessary.

Step 4: Welcome New Members

Conduct a new member induction ceremony

An induction ceremony is the symbolic beginning to a member's service as a Lion, and is key to lifelong retention of a member. The welcoming Lions should plan these activities using LCI's New Member Induction Ceremonies Guide. Be sure to order a free New Member Induction Kit from the club supplies shop for each new member.

Offer your new members orientation and mentoring

It is critical for new members to feel welcome and develop a sense of belonging in their club, so connecting them to other Lions and properly orienting them is important to their success as a Lion and your success as a club.

- **Orientation** - The importance of new member orientation cannot be emphasized enough. Orientation provides a foundation for your new members by helping them understand how your club functions, what their roles will be, and the big picture of their district, multiple district and LCI. Informed new members are more likely to feel comfortable with your club and become actively involved right away. A properly oriented member is also one who is likely to remain in Lions for years.
- Conduct orientation using the Lions New Member Orientation Guide within the first three months of membership.
- **Mentoring** - The Lions Mentoring Program helps every member achieve the goal of better serving his or her community. It is a program of personal development to help your members realize the potential of their unique skills and knowledge. The mentoring program prepares them for leadership in Lions and in their personal lives, as well. For LCI, this means more hands and better service for the people who need it most.



o LCI suggests that level one of the Basic Mentoring Program be completed during the same time period as orientation. The New Member Orientation Guide closely follows the goals and activities required for completion of level one of the Basic Mentoring Program.

New members should be offered these programs through their sponsors. Sponsors should contact their GLT district coordinator for information about these programs, as well as training.

What's next? Involve Your New Members

People join Lions to serve. After welcoming your new members, it is important to make sure they become actively involved in your club and your service projects to ensure they have a good experience.

If new members feel welcome and engaged, and if they are involved in service, they will stay part of the club for a long time.

Members get involved for a number of reasons. They like to:

- Serve their community
- Be involved with a specific service or cause
- Be with friends
- Become a leader in the community
- Be with other family members who are members

How can your club provide these experiences to all of your members?

Members feel involved when you ask for their opinion. The New Member Questionnaire in this guide is a good way to learn what your new members expect from your club and what their ideas are for future club projects and activities. LCI recommends using the questionnaire in this guide as a template to create a customized survey for your club. LCI has developed a Membership Satisfaction Guide to assist clubs in providing the best experience they can to their members.

Recruiting Goals

Club Name: _____ Date: _____

To prepare for new member recruiting, we will: _____

Why do we want new members?

(Example: If we had 5 more members, we could screen 100 more children for vision problems each month.)

Who are the new members our club wants? Why?

(Example: We want to invite younger members who are 10 years younger than our current age to revitalize our membership and extend the life of our club.)

Membership Development Team

This team guides your club's recruiting activities and exercises their individual talents to maximize your club's efforts. There are four key roles on this team:

Organizing: Organizing the recruiting program, planning activities and prioritizing tasks.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Promoting: Creating brochures, recruiting materials and press releases; managing photos; and updating your club's Internet presence.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Reaching Out: Talking to target members, community members and family members; reaching out and following up with prospective members.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Welcoming: Conducting the New Member Induction Ceremony, coordinating with new member sponsors to offer new member orientation and the Basic Mentoring Program.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____



Club Growth Plan

Who will we recruit? (List your club's target members.)

Where and when will we recruit? (Identify locations and times to help reach target members.)

Date for completion: _____

What materials will we recruit with? (Consider printed and electronic.)

Date for completion: _____

How will we promote our information meeting?

Date for completion: _____

How will we follow up after the meeting?

Date for completion: _____



Recruiting Wheel

The Recruiting Wheel is an effective method to compile lists of people who could be invited to join your club. Distribute this page at a regular meeting. For each category on the wheel, have an experienced Lion ask: “Who is the one?”

Example: Who is the one relative you feel would like to make a contribution to improve the community? Give your members a brief time to think about their choices, and fill in the Build a Lions’ Network form as thoroughly as possible.



* May include but is not limited to elected officials, school principals, police and fire chiefs and hospital administrators.

** May include but is not limited to doctors, accountants, dentists, lawyers and bankers



Build a Lions Network

Serving as a Lion is an honor. That's why we invite people to make a commitment to our cause.

Research shows that over 40% of Lions joined because a friend was already a member. Do you know anyone interested in joining a Lions club? If you don't know of anyone now, maybe your friends, family or co-workers do.

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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Name: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

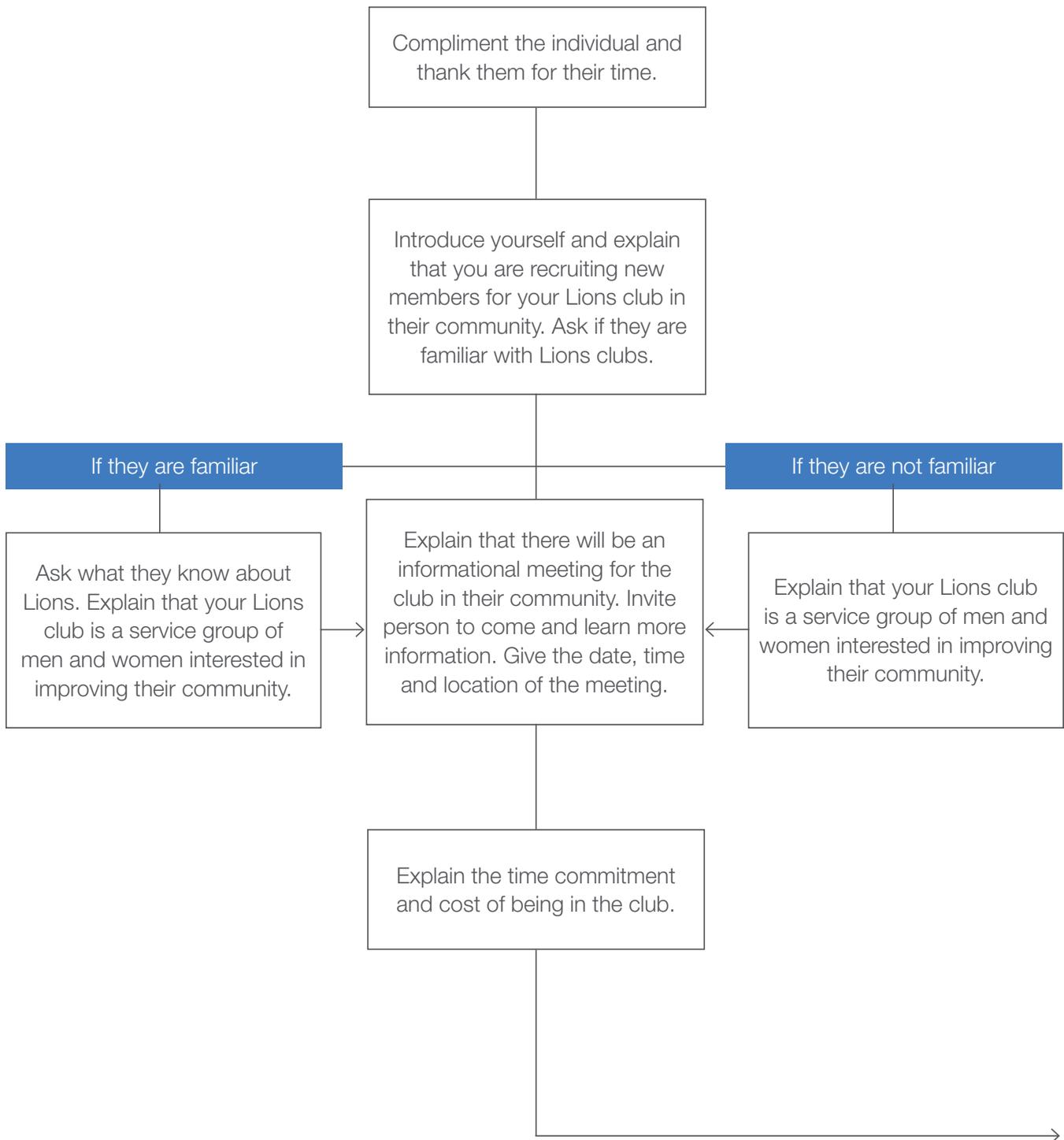
Name: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

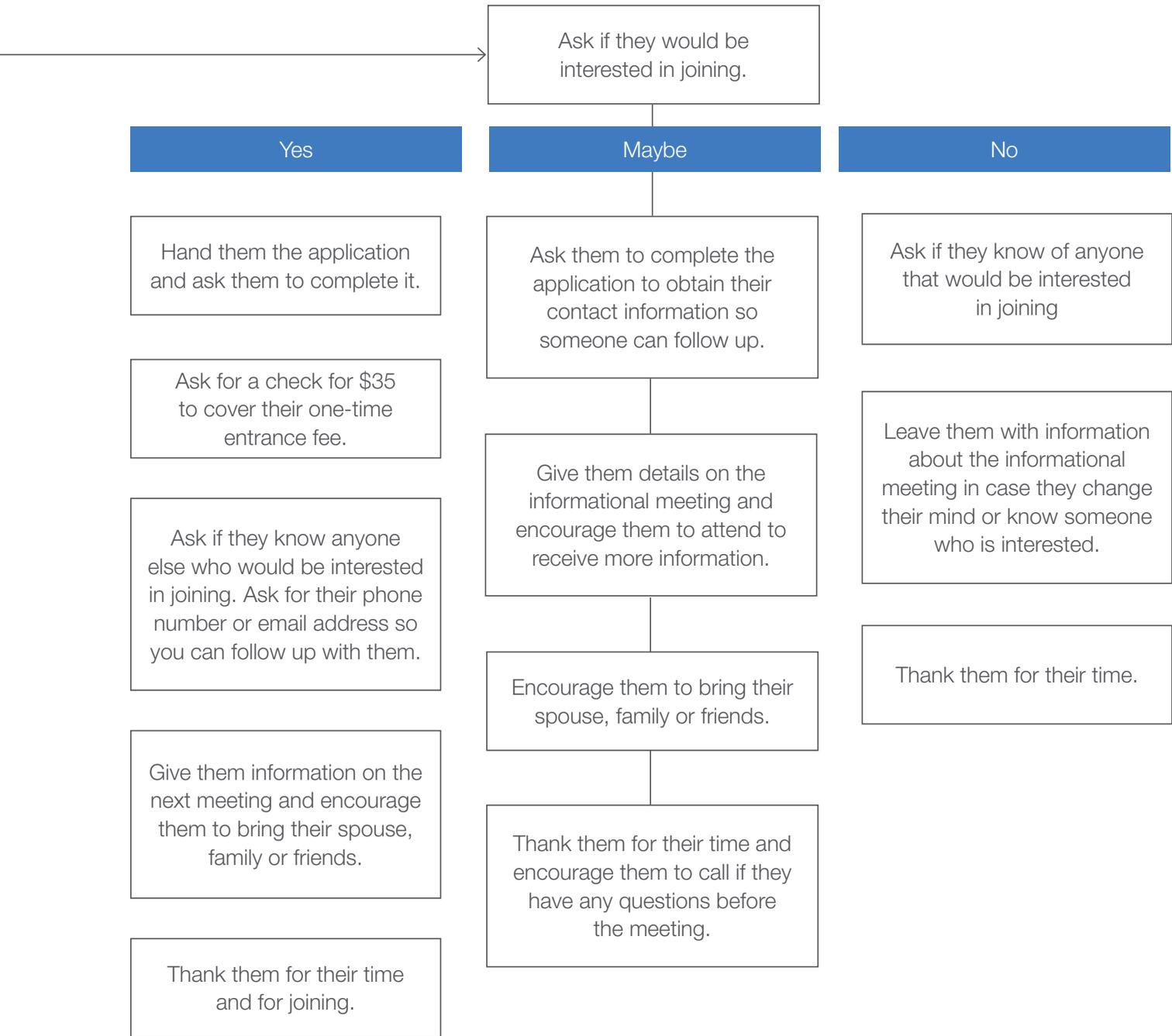
Phone: _____ Email: _____



Script for Recruiting

The script below is a guide for talking to prospective members. It is most effective when you adapt it to your own personality and when you speak from the heart.





New Member Questionnaire

Club Name: _____ Date: _____

Why did you join our Lions club? _____

What are you looking for in your involvement with our club? _____

What personal skills do you have that might be an asset to our club? _____

What club activities would you like to be involved in? _____

What ideas do you have to improve our club experience? _____

What ideas do you have for service projects that we are not currently involved in? _____

Is there anything else you feel is important? _____





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