

CLT - LCIF Coord, Fundraising

Quick recap

This training session focused on Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) and its role in fundraising and supporting Lions Clubs' service activities. Kenneth Leja, the Council Chair for Multiple District 21, led the presentation explaining that LCIF serves as the financial arm of Lions International, with 100% of donations going directly to humanitarian initiatives, global health programs, and disaster relief. Discussion included:

- an overview of differences between Lions Clubs International (LCI) and the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), clarifying that LCI handles administrative duties while LCIF manages fundraising and grant distribution for community projects;
- how to communicate LCIF's impact with effective storytelling about grant outcomes to encourage club member donations;
- the responsibilities of LCIF coordinators, the challenges of promoting LCIF including encouraging club members to support the foundation through Melvin Jones Fellowships and meeting the Club Excellence Award requirement of member donations;
- an overview of various grant opportunities available through LCIF, including matching grants, vision grants, disaster relief grants, and community impact grants;
- practical guidance on fundraising strategies, including online and event-based fundraising approaches, and the importance of starting grant applications early, as approvals occur quarterly at International Board meetings;
- shared insights into budget allocations and past grant successes, emphasizing the importance of connecting personal stories to financial contributions;
- the potential benefits of establishing a state-level foundation to support local initiatives and the value of using qualified charitable organization (QCO) donations; and
- the need for better communication strategies and enthusiastic leadership to engage club members more effectively in supporting LCIF and other district projects.

Summary

LCIF Introduction and Importance

Ken Leja, council chair for Multiple District 21, conducted a session on Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) focusing on fundraising and the role of LCIF coordinators. He explained the mission of LCIF, emphasizing its function as the financial arm of Lions International, which supports humanitarian efforts and grants. He highlighted the importance of understanding the difference between Lions International and LCIF, and

discussed the need for LCIF coordinators to develop plans for effective fundraising and managing club dynamics in support of the foundation. He emphasized the importance of LCIF in fundraising efforts for clubs, noting that – while working with foundations may not be as exciting as service projects – it is crucial for club survival.

Lions Club Fundraising Strategies

CC Ken explained the Lions Club's fundraising approach describing how money is raised through various activities like raffles, bingo, garage sales, and events such as pancake breakfasts and barbecues. He discussed the role of the fundraising chair in coordinating these efforts versus the LCIF coordinator's role in managing donations and grants from members. He also discussed challenges in explaining and promoting LCIF (our Foundation) to club members, and explored such ideas for increasing support as setting specific fundraising goals, providing regular updates on how funds are used, and implementing a "tithing" system where members contribute a small amount regularly (i.e., as an effective way to connect emotionally with members) to encourage greater participation.

LCIF Coordinator Role Discussion

Discussion included the role of LCIF in supporting Lions service activities, highlighting its impact since 1968 through disaster relief, Lions Quest and cataract surgeries. LCIF coordinators are responsible for encouraging members to support the foundation through personal donations and through Melvin Jones Fellowships, which recognize humanitarian service with a \$1,000 donation. Past club LCIF coordinators, while well-intentioned, may not have effectively generated enthusiasm for the Foundation; some approaches were overly critical or difficult to understand. CC Ken emphasized that an LCIF coordinator become a resource for clubs about the foundation's role in enabling global and local humanitarian impact.

Lions Club Communications Training

Discussion on Lions Club communications and fundraising strategies included a focus on the importance of diversifying communications tools and methods, utilizing business cards with QR codes, professional templates, and creating a consistent brand look for the club. CC Ken shared digital templates and contact information for LCIF coordinators and discussed...

LCIF Donor Tracking and Grants

CC Ken explained the role of tracking donations as the LCIF coordinator, emphasizing the importance of building a library of potential donors and supporters. He introduced the LCIF grants toolkit available on the website, highlighting such various grant opportunities as hunger grants, disaster relief grants, and childhood cancer grants. The discussion focused on how coordinators could advocate for LCIF support among club members and encourage

donations of any amount, with the added benefit of recognition for donors.

Lions Club Grant Programs Overview

CC Ken explained the Melvin Jones Fellowship recognition and discussed the Club Excellence Award. He outlined how clubs can earn community impact grants ranging from 15% to 30% of their donations, with examples of how these funds could be used for equipment or service projects.

LCIF Grant Investment Returns

CC Ken discussed the significant return on investment from grants, noting that last year's donation was about \$80,000 submitted, but the multiple district received more than \$250,000 in grants – definitely, donation monies were “staying in the local community” – an oft-heard response. He highlighted various grants including the \$120,000 Childhood Cancer Grant, several disaster relief grants, membership and marketing grants, plus LCIF grants for Lions Quest within the multiple district.

LCIF Coordinator Resources

Discussion included an in-depth review of resources available to the new LCIF coordinator, including guides on grant applications, best practices, and online fundraising, explaining the step-by-step process for organizing online fundraisers.

Lions Clubs Fundraising Guide Presentation

CC Ken presented a fundraising guide from Lions International that outlines an 8-page process for both online and event fundraising activities. The guide includes such steps as forming a committee, setting goals, choosing platforms (i.e., GoFundMe, Facebook, etc.) and promoting the fundraiser through multimedia content. CC Ken emphasized the importance of thanking supporters.

Lions Quest Program Implementation Update

CC Ken explained Lions Quest, a program aimed at school social and emotional learning initiatives, which is being re-instituted in the multiple district, noting that three schools are piloting the updated program and that 38 teachers have been trained to integrate Lions Quest into local school programs – made available through LCIF Lions Quest grants.

LCIF Coordinator Role Overview

CC Ken summarized the role of LCIF coordinator as the “Resource for resources,” including tracking donations and supporting clubs with various grants such as matching grants, vision grants, and disaster relief grants. He emphasized that grants are not loans and

require a budget and action plan. Dorine inquired about the timeline for grant approval, and Kenneth clarified that grants are reviewed quarterly, suggesting starting the grant application process well in advance of project implementation.

Lions Club Grant Process Training

Discussion concluded with an explanation of the LCIF grant submission process. CC Ken explained the grants are approved quarterly at international board meetings, and emphasized the importance of correctly completing (i.e., filling out the grant applications) to ensure approval. CC Ken emphasized that the current training session is preparing next year's leaders to start writing grants now for projects planned for the 2026-27 fiscal year.