

Public relations is a great way for your Lions club to garner media coverage for the service that is being done in your own community and worldwide. LCIF offers numerous resources to assist in contacting all types of media outlets that could potentially cover a story about what your club is doing in the community.

All forms of communication – written, verbal and non-verbal— are incorporated in public relations. It includes writing news releases and distributing promotional flyers. Equally important are actions often taken for granted, such as wearing a Lions lapel pin or marching in a parade. Good public relations—informing the community that your club built the park, conducted the vision screening or collected the eyeglasses—will help foster community support.

Having good public relations can even advance your club’s membership efforts. People want to belong to a successful and reliable organization. By actively promoting your club and its worthwhile activities, you’ll be projecting a positive image in the community and showing that your club is worth joining. It is important to tell people about the good work your club is doing in the community.

## Steps for Successful Public Relations for Lions

- 1 Visit the PR Tools section on Lions Clubs International’s Web site at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) for resources and assistance.
- 2 Make a list of your programs and how they serve others.
- 3 Draw up a PR plan for the year outlining how you are going to promote these programs.
- 4 Develop a fact sheet and distribute it widely throughout the community.
- 5 Plan a calendar of events and distribute to the media and community groups.
- 6 Set up a Web site and link to other community groups.
- 7 Sponsor a sight-related program that corresponds with a special event, day or month (Example: World Sight Day in October or Diabetes Awareness Month in November).
- 8 Send a public service announcement at least two times a year. (There are some general vision PSAs available from LCI.)
- 9 Tell one person each day about the work of Lions’ programs and how you serve your community.

### What is news?

News is information about recent or upcoming events or happenings that are relevant to the public.

### What is newsworthy?

A story should be timely, relevant, original and have an impact on the community.

- Deliver news releases and letters to local newspaper editors
- Provide basic information to local media calendar editors
- Relay story ideas and send photographs to general or feature reporters at local newspapers

*Always include: who, what, when and where, along with a local contact name and phone number.*

## Dealing with the Media: Do's & Don'ts

### Do:

- Stress the need that will be filled by your activity.
- Offer the media opportunities for visuals.
- Use Lions logos. Wear Lions vests, hats and shirts.
- Talk in terms of people assisted. Explain how you will impact people.
- Keep a list of the names and contact information for people and families helped for future human interest stories.
- Take photos of the screenings and activities-then send to LCIF and the media.
- Contact the media again after events to tell and show results.
- Encourage members to offer their first-hand testimonies.
- Keep a list of media contacts for future use.
- Make the story local by showing the impact on the local community.

### Don't:

- Concentrate only on your center or project when approaching the media – demonstrate the greater need that is being served.
- Go to your contact only once. Contact them again with follow up.
- Concentrate on major national or major daily papers – concentrate on local media.
- Use jargon that is confusing to those who are not familiar with Lions.
- Repeat negative phrases.
- Use the phrases “no comment” or “off the record” when speaking with media.
- Lose your cool when dealing with media – respond rationally.

## Materials Available from LCIF

- Fill-in-the-blank news releases that your club/district can quickly modify to insert local information and send to the media. Available online in all official languages.
- Public service announcements for television and radio that can be customized to include local information.
- PowerPoint Presentations to show at club meetings and other Lions events.
- Tabletop exhibit that can be booked to promote LCIF. Shipping is paid by LCIF; currently only available in the U.S.
- Publications, Brochures, DVDs and other promotional materials.
- Statistics and new information to share with Lions and media.

*\*When using materials from LCIF be sure to include local information. Local media want to report on their community.*



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