

New Lodge Organization Checklist

Getting Started

Have you identified a community for a new lodge? _____

Answer the questions below. These will help you and the District Vice President determine whether the community is appropriate for a new lodge.

- **What is the overall size of the community?** _____
- **How large is the Norwegian community?** _____
- **How large is the Scandinavian community?** _____
- **Are there other groups similar to Sons of Norway in town?** _____
- **How close is the nearest Sons of Norway lodge?** _____
What lodge is it? _____
- **How many members already live in the area?** _____
 - Request a membership list. Either the Membership Services Coordinator or Membership Coordinator can provide a list of members in the area. These members are a good place to start when inviting people to an informational meeting. Either Sherry or Joe can be reached at (800) 945-8851.
- Does the community have a newspaper? _____
If so, what is its circulation? _____

Things to Consider Before the Information Meeting

Pick an appropriate location. _____

- Most importantly make sure your meeting place is somewhere everyone is familiar with and is easily accessible. Remember to pick a place everyone will feel comfortable with. For example, not *everyone* might feel comfortable at a senior center. Libraries, churches or restaurants all have potential meeting spaces.

Pick an appropriate time. _____

- Is your time convenient for most people? A lunch meeting might be a good idea for some people, but it excludes everyone who works. Selecting an evening or weekend might be the best choice, but consider your target membership.

Plan an agenda. _____

- **Try not to make it a 'meeting'.** Make your informational meeting an interactive experience for members and guests. If you're able, consider something like an introductory [Cultural Skills](#) lesson to give guests a feel for one of the most popular benefits of membership.
- **Be informational, but not overwhelming.** The process for starting a lodge can seem overwhelming to guests. Keep the informational meeting to information about Sons of Norway. There will be plenty of time to go over the process of starting a lodge with people who are committed.

Invite members. _____

- Existing members are the best place to start when recruiting for a new lodge. Take the time to invite members personally with a phone call to the informational meeting, it will help the new lodge process run more smoothly.

Invite nearby lodges. _____

- Leaders or members from nearby lodges are a great resource for starting a new lodge. They have experience in Sons of Norway and better understanding of tools and resources. They can be a great mentor for a new lodge on its path to institution.

Develop an advertising plan. _____

- **Notify local papers.** Check with the local newspaper to see if they'd be willing to do a story about the possibility of a new lodge coming to town, especially if you're offering something interesting or unique at the meeting. The [Lodge Publicity Toolkit](#) in the members section can help you create plan to connect with local media. Don't forget to utilize the community calendars in newspapers as well.
- **Contact local churches.** Especially Lutheran churches – these can be a terrific way to reach a wider audience. Check into getting materials about informational meetings in church bulletins.
- **Utilize bulletin boards in the community.** If you have a contact in a community, ask if they'd be willing to hang flyers. They can be hung in libraries, restaurants, coffee shops and other strategic places in the community to raise awareness of an informational meeting. Don't forget to include meeting time, location and contact information. A sample flyer can be found in the members

section of the Sons of Norway website under management.

- **Look into other organizations.** Are there other Norwegian or Scandinavian groups in the community? A local college with a Norwegian or Scandinavian studies program? Reach out to them and invite them to the informational meeting.

Request supplies from Sons of Norway Headquarters. _____

- Make sure you have at least a sampling of up to date Sons of Norway materials. An event kit is a good place to start. For questions about materials, contact supply@sofn.com. These materials should be shared with guests at the meeting. Be sure to check out the [Lodge Supply Catalogue](#) for an up to date listing of Sons of Norway materials. Consider including the [History of Sons of Norway](#) from the Info Bank Units in the members section of the Sons of Norway website.

Request the New Lodge Organization Inquiry form. _____

- This is a mandatory form. A new lodge will not receive a member number until this form is completed and sent to Sons of Norway Headquarters. Fortunately, many of the questions you have answered before getting started will help you complete the form. A copy of this can be requested from fraternal@sofn.com.

Planning the Informational Meeting

Draw attention to the meeting space. _____

- If you're able, do something outside the meeting space to draw attention to it being the location of the informational meeting. The event kit you should request from the Supply Department will include a small Sons of Norway banner that would be appropriate, but balloons or handmade signs are also good options.

Have a signup sheet. _____

- Encourage all guests to sign in and provide a telephone number and/or email address regardless if they sign up or not. This will provide you with a base of interested community members.

Create a welcoming space. _____

- Be sure to appoint a greeter to welcome guests as they arrive at the meeting.

Create a leadership group. _____

- This group will work to increase awareness and interest in the community for the new lodge through programming, advertising and event opportunities. Having at least 2 or 3 interested people will help ensure the work is spread evenly and progress can be made. Be sure to share their contact information with the Fraternal Department so we can share resources with these

leaders. If members from nearby lodges attend, invite one of them to lend a hand with this committee.

After the Informational Meeting

Schedule another meeting. _____

- Don't lose momentum! Keep everyone excited by scheduling regular meetings to keep everyone informed about the new lodge's progress and motivated!

Contact guests. _____

- Follow up with a thank you to guests. Even if they did not sign up, it is important to call guests and thank them for attending the informational meeting. You should do two more things on this phone call: First, invite them to join on the phone. If they decline, be sure to invite them to the next meeting.

Follow up with leadership group. _____

- Again – keep the motivation going!