

Guidance on How to Start A Division

Below is some guidance and resources associated with starting a new LAOH division.

-This is a summary of various articles taken from the 2016 LAOH National Constitution regarding new divisions and membership. This is just a summary you should read and become familiar with the entire Constitution and Ritual of our Order. Please make sure you have a current Constitution and Ritual. They are available on our national website- WWW.LADIESAOH.COM.

- The Ritual has a section on the ceremony on how to install a new division.

- Do the preliminary work, have a meeting with the potential new division organizer and then with the potential new members; explain what the LAOH is all about. Stress we are not a social group, we are an Order, a Sisterhood. Be positive about the LAOH, do not discuss petty squabbles.

A good thing to discuss is why they want to be Hibernians? Where did they hear about the LAOH? Have they been a member of the LAOH in the past? This will give the Organizer some sense of who the new people are and how much assistance they will need in the future. A person who has been in the LAOH in the past may have to be brought up to date on our current rules and procedures.

-Also attached is the application that ALL new members must fill out in advance, so the organizer may review beforehand to make sure everyone has filled it out completely and all are eligible for membership. ***[Article V, Section 2. A minimum of fifteen (15) women, of which at least ten (10) are not currently members of the Order, may form a new Division pursuant to Section 1.]*** After the division is organized any member from another division with approval from the new division may transfer into the new division. The transferred member must file a Transfer of Membership form. (see Constitution for details).

- FORM: 'permission to start a division' **must** be filled out; this is the formal request to organize a division. **This form will include all the names and contact info of the ladies requesting to form a new LAOH division. This form must be kept in the new division's records and the ruling bodies records and filed with the higher levels as needed.**

- Verify if the new division has a meeting place; review how many meeting are expected. See Constitution.

-Article III, Section 6. New Divisions shall be supplied with the following at the expense of the National Board: one (1) set of Rituals, one (1) set of Constitutions, fifty (50) membership applications, a kit consisting of stationary, dues cards, official report forms and an application for a Charter.

- Discuss the purchase of **the St. Brigid statue and the flags** for the meetings as well as this is property of the LAOH not an individual.

-The Organizer must have adequate time (4-6 hours) to sit and talk with the members of the new division to explain how a division is run. This may even require several meetings. Reassure them we are there to assist after division is opened. Make it possible that each new member has a copy of Constitution and Ritual. They may be downloaded from the website or purchased via the National Supply Chairperson.

- Before the official opening of the division the Organizer should review each office's position and their duties; when elections of officers are held there should be at least one member who is willing to run for each office. Read the duties of each office but explain them in English so you won't scare away new members from taken office. ***Reassure them we are here to assist after division is opened.***

- There should be an agreed upon place and time to hold the first meeting. All new members should be notified. This is a private meeting for the members of the new division as well as any current LAOH members.

- A public ceremony may be held after this meeting. This is encouraged so family and friends may see the beautiful swearing in ceremony of the LAOH.

- Encourage the new division to take photographs and publicize the new division, this is a good way to advertise there is a new LAOH division, what we are all about, as well as encourage new members to join our ranks.

-The division number will be determined by the LAOH ruling body; consideration shall be given to any county/state bylaws that may discuss this or consideration from the new division (they may want to take a number from an old division in their County.)

-The division may select a name, ex. St. Brigid, Our Lady of Knock etc.; this should be discussed in advance of opening the division, so it may formally be read into the division's minutes. This name shall be approved by the ruling LAOH body or by Bylaws. This name will also be included on the Charter.

-**The Organizer's first duty** is to give the Membership Oath (swearing in) to all the new members, this officially opens the new division. See LAOH Ritual under '**INSTITUTION OF A NEW DIVISION**'. These ladies are now members of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc.

-After the division is officially organized (new members are all sworn in) there must be an official nomination and election of Officers. The organizer shall officiate at these elections, someone must take minutes for the official record of the newly organization division. These minutes may be taken by a newly installed member or by a member of the organizing team. These officers will be listed on the Charter. This will also show the proper election procedure to be followed for future division elections.

-The Organizer should review the sign of courtesy with the new division as well as discuss a little about who the LAOH is, what does the word Hibernian mean, what we stand for, our traditions. Review our relationship with the AOH, the Columban Missions etc. Just a brief overview so they may understand that we are a national Order and have a long rich history that this new division, our new Hibernian sisters are now part of a sisterhood of Irish Catholic women.

- **A request for Charter** (filed **after** division is organized and elections are held). Explain the importance of their Charter (See Ritual Book). The Charter is held open for ninety days; which means that any lady joining this division in it's first 90 days will be considered a 'Charter Member'. This is a great honor, you will always be listed in your division's founding history.

- ***It is advisable for the organizer to compile a list of all the members using the same format as our yearend report; this way they will know the format to keep records. this way when the yearend reports are due they will already have most of the work completed.***

- The Organizer will notify the higher ruling bodies of the organization of a new division with a list of newly elected officers and membership. The Board of the next higher level of the division either County, State, or National officers will be in contact with each new division officer to review and teach the new officers about their duties, deadlines, reports etc. The higher Officers should periodically check in with the new division just to see if they are doing well; they should NEVER take over or try to run the division, give guidance but let the division make their own decision unless they are in violation of County/State Bylaws or National Constitution.

Things to Discuss with new Divisions

- **Explain to new President appointments;** explain each appointment and their duties. These are not elected positions, Chaplain, FFAI, Immigration & Legislation, Public Relations, Webmaster, Fundraiser, Good & Welfare, Membership...

- **Regularly scheduled meetings.** Each Division is required to have regularly scheduled meetings, a specific night, time so all members know in advance what night they should be at their meeting. Refer to the LAOH national constitution and state & county bylaws for current regulations.

- **Explain how to set up and open a proper meeting (statue, flags).** Prayers of Ritual.

- Organizer and Officers (when available) of the ruling body should attend the second meeting of the new division to show the new officers **how to set-up and run a proper meeting.**

-**Explain what 'Robert's Rules of Order' is;** briefly explain about making motions, seconds, discussion, and voting.

-**Explain the importance of keeping Division records, especially Minutes.** Each Division must file various office reports and will need to refer to these records. These records will serve as a reminder of what occurred and what was voted upon at a meeting in case there is a need to verify a motion in the past or simply just a reminder of how something was done in the past. These records will also serve as a history of your Division.

- **Explain the significance of the colors of each level (see Ritual) of our Order:** Blue-Division, Green is County, White is State, Gold is National. Explain officer medallions.

- **Explain LAOH Supplies, Jewelry, Clothing, Sashes.** Provide forms of the order and explain how to order these items from the LAOH.

- Explain the significance of having a **division banner** with your LAOH Div.#, Name, and logo.

-**Explain the use of our LAOH Logo,** the do's and don'ts.

- Encourage the new division to **set-up an 'division' email** address to be used for division business. Each officer should be encouraged to establish an email address to be used for LAOH business. **Members and officers should always be discouraged from using their work email addresses.** Email names should be simple and business like they should try to use LAOH in the name.

- Explain the **Chain-of-Command of our Order for all divisions**; Division Officers, Division President, County Board, State Board, National Board, National Constitution. A Division member or officer seeking information should always go to their next higher ruling body. They should first read the National Constitution and any state or county bylaws then go to their next ruling body for any questions or advise they may need.

- Give the new division **contact information** on all the higher ruling bodies of the LAOH. Give them the various websites to go to for additional information.

- **Bank account** may be opened in your official name "Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc. Division#, County, State; ex. Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc., Division Six, Kings County, NY. The honorary name you choose for your division is not part of your legal name, it may be used on jackets, shirts, banners and will be included on your charter but it is not part of your "LEGAL" name. For corporate and business reasons you use your legal name for all official business ex. Banking, IRS documents.

- In order to open a **bank account**, you will need a EIN# from the IRS; **you are NEVER to contact the IRS**. All IRS business is taken care of by our National Treasurer only. Once your division is organized you will contact your County/ State Treasurer who will notify the National Treasurer of your existence and she and she only will contact the IRS for your EIN#. This can only be done AFTER your division is organized.

-**IRS**: any correspondence received from the IRS should be directed to your higher-level treasurer or president. If action is necessary or correspondence with the IRS is necessary, the National Treasurer is the ONLY person permitted to contact the IRS.

- Higher ruling officers should discuss with the new Division officers and if possible explain to all the members **the duties and projects involved in their office or appointments**. For example, Project St. Patrick, SOAR, Columban Missions, Natl Irish Writing Contest, Spirit of St. Brigid Project.

- Higher ruling officers are expected to **keep in touch with the new division** as needed to remind them of deadlines and work to be done, especially near 'report time'. They should also review with the new officers how to keep their books and records of the Order.

- Organizer should explain to new division officers and members that they are welcome and are encouraged and **expected to attend higher level (County, State, and National) meetings and conventions**. Explain that they have a voice and a vote.

-Organizer should explain that all our members are expected to participate in their division activities, not just the officers. **Remember we do not have guest members, all our members participate!**

- I also included a membership poster (done in Publisher) that can be edited to put in local contact info. If you or the local people do not have the Publisher program, they may send the Organizer their contact info and she will edit the poster and send it back to you in a PDF. ***Many areas have used the poster at member drives, fairs, feis; we printed the poster the size of a poster board and in vinyl, so they could be used outdoors. You can also print it in the size of a regular sheet of paper to post on bulletin boards.***

These are some basic items that need to be followed when organizing a new division; I am sure there will be many additional questions to be answered. The important thing is to make sure the new division keeps in contact with the ruling body for advice.

It is expected that the higher-level officers will attend several of the new division's meeting to guide them in how the LAOH operates; they should NEVER take over or try to run the division, give guidance but let the division make their own decision unless they are in violation of County/State Bylaws or National Constitution.

Remember if a new division is taught the proper way of doing business they will be an asset for our Order.