

# Commissioner Training Essentials - Special Edition #4



Time allotted	25 minutes
Teaching format	Instructor-led discussions with PowerPoint support

## Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CM Special Edition #4 - Unit Metrics January 2025 – 1 per person</li></ul>
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CM Special Edition #4 – Discussion Guide</li><li>• CM Special Edition #4 – Commissioner Training Essentials PowerPoint presentation</li><li>• Computer and Projector</li></ul>
Resources for additional participant learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Commissioner Website (<a href="https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/">https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/</a>)</li></ul>

## Course Connections

Connections to other courses	Commissioner Position Specific Training, both online and in person
------------------------------	--

## Presentation Outline

### Introduction and Course Objectives (Slide 2) – 2 minutes

Introduce the learning objectives, noting that by the end of this session, each participant should...

- **Understand** recent changes in how commissioners approach unit service
- **Describe** the components of unit service
- **Be familiar with** unit conversations, unit metrics, commissioner connections, and how commissioners can use them to better serve units by helping them establish unit goals while providing unit support

### Recent Unit Service Changes – 5 minutes (slides 3-8)

#### Unit Service Changes (Slide 3)

The way we approach unit service has changed. This chart uses short phrases that compare where we were two to three years ago versus how we are approaching unit service now and into the future.

Commissioners continue to represent the district and council, but our priority is to be the best single resource for the unit. That means we have changed our traditional approach to interacting with units.

When we consider the negative implications of terms such as “task”, “assessment”, and “auditor”, we can better understand the need to adjust our approach to making an “impact”, establishing “connections,” and becoming “allies”. The goal is for unit leaders to view commissioners as partners and allies, rather than as auditors and taskmasters. The emphasis is now on conversation to make and improve connections.

Our current in-person training for commissioner-specific positions has incorporated these changes. The Online training is currently being updated and is expected to be available in the first quarter of 2026. Additionally, many current commissioners may not be fully aware that these transitions have been made. This presentation is also designed for commissioners who are unfamiliar with the changes.

#### **Unit Service Changes (slide 4)**

New methods involve commissioners partnering with units and seeking ways to help them achieve success.

- Unit assessments have been eliminated. Commissioners can document meaningful interactions with units. Commissioners can access the Connection Guides directly.
- Scoring of units has been eliminated. Objective unit metrics are visible in Commissioner Tools, including the existing unit dashboard and reports
- Unit Service Plans have been eliminated. Commissioners can document goals that the unit may establish.
- Priority needs were a feature of detailed assessments and have been eliminated. Commissioners can document areas where the unit needs help.

**Note:** Some of the former reports are still available in Commissioner Tools and are being phased out. It is legacy material and will not appear anywhere in the future, nor is it used in current Commissioner Tools entries.

#### **Mission, Vision, and Goal (Slide 5)**

As commissioners, we share Scouting America’s Mission, Vision, and Goal. Our support remains unchanged.

**Mission:** To prepare youth to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

**Vision:** Prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader, guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

**Goal:** Prepare America’s youth for lives of impact and purpose.

#### **We now have 2 Objectives (Slide 6)**

- **Membership retention**
- **Membership growth**

While many commissioners may not be **directly** involved in recruiting and retaining youth and adult members, all commissioners **contribute to membership growth by working closely with units to ensure their** success. Growing Scouting requires commissioners to partner with volunteers throughout Scouting America, and if we do that well, Scouting's growth will be significant **and** sustainable.

***Our unit service objectives change as the needs of Scouting America units change. All commissioners should be aware that we have a role to play in membership retention and growth.***

### **Commissioner Culture (Slide 7)**

**Be the Heart:** Scouting's units are its heart; its success depends on them; they deliver its programs to youth. Commissioners support unit leaders in developing a safe, welcoming environment and delivering Scouting's programs effectively. We exist to support Scouting's heart.

**Build Relationships:** Commissioners must develop relationships with unit leaders we serve based on mutual respect, candor, and trust. Without that, the communication and collaboration required to support units effectively are impossible.

**Change Lives:** Scouting changes lives – of the youth it serves and the adults who support it (both volunteers *and* professionals). As they adopt Scouting's values, they become engaged citizens who strengthen our communities, nation, and world.

**Commissioner Culture was introduced in 2023. Commissioner Moment CM 003 - Commissioner Culture discusses this concept in greater detail.**

### **Our Purpose (Slide 8)**

In the recent past, commissioners have had multiple priorities. While all of these were worthwhile, they have been replaced by a single purpose: **Being the Single Best Resource.**

Unit leaders need to know that they have someone to go to who can either give them an answer or find an answer. While commissioners won't have the answer to every question, they should be the single best resource for unit leaders who need answers or support.

### **Our Methods (Slide 9)**

- Objective Metrics
- Unit Connections
- The Key 3
- Impact, Not Activity
- Grow Partnerships
- Change the Way We Work Together

Commissioners review objective metrics and have meaningful conversations with unit leaders, listening carefully to their needs and concerns. Commissioners are not there to grade or score, nor to tell unit leaders what to do. Instead, they collaborate with the unit's Key 3 to ensure the

unit's success. In the absence of sufficient commissioners, the available commissioners should partner with those units that have the greatest need for support. Helping unit leaders achieve their vision will grow meaningful partnerships between commissioners and unit leaders.

Always remember, it is an honor to serve as a commissioner.

## **The Components of Unit Service – 3 minutes (slide 9)**

### **Components of Unit Service (Slide 10)**

There are 3 components used in Unit Service.

The first is **Unit Metrics**. Unit Metrics introduce objective data about units. They can serve as a starting point for conversations and may suggest areas for discussion to help understand how the unit operates and how commissioners can engage to support it. They are **NOT** measures of success or failure.

The second is **Unit Connections**, a method and tool that will help commissioners develop partnerships with unit volunteers and guide conversations toward areas where we can have a positive impact on units.

The third component is **Commissioner Tools**, which involves integrating Unit Connections and key metrics into our Commissioner Tools information\_system.

**Commissioner Moment CM 009 - Technology in Unit Service** discusses how Commissioner Tools support unit service by supporting and recording connections.

## **Unit Conversations, Unit Connections, Unit Metrics, Commissioner Connections, Unit Goals, and Providing Unit Support– 13 minutes (slides 11-18)**

### **Unit Conversations (Slide 11)**

Conversations are the focal point of our operations. While we may not have the opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions at every interaction, commissioners should be prepared to discuss objective unit information, such as activities, membership, and training. We find this kind of information in unit metrics.

We need to build relationships through focused conversations to understand unit dynamics and operations better, enabling commissioners to serve and support the unit more effectively by meeting their needs and offering assistance. Connection guides help us focus our conversations.

### **Unit Connections (Slide 12)**

**Meaningful conversations lead to meaningful unit connections, which have many positive outcomes:**

- **Building relationships:** Connections facilitate the establishment of strong relationships built on trust, respect, and shared goals. These relationships form the backbone of successful teamwork and collaboration.

- **Enhancing conversations:** Strong connections begin with knowledge to enable open communication channels. When individuals feel connected, they are more likely to express their thoughts, concerns, and ideas freely, leading to better understanding and problem-solving.
- **Driving collaboration:** Connected individuals and groups are more inclined to collaborate effectively towards common objectives. They leverage each other's strengths, resources, and expertise to achieve shared outcomes that benefit everyone involved.
- **Fostering support:** Connections create a network of support where individuals can seek help, guidance, and encouragement from one another.
- **Creating & growing partnerships:** Connections lay the groundwork for establishing and nurturing partnerships. These partnerships, built on mutual trust and shared interests, can lead to new opportunities, innovative solutions, and long-term success.
- **Changing Lives:** Connections have the power to transform lives by providing access to new resources, perspectives, and opportunities. Through meaningful interactions and relationships, individuals can achieve personal growth, overcome challenges, and reach their full potential.

### **Unit Connections: A Commissioner's Guide to Position Impact (Slide 13)**

**Briefly discuss: Unit Connections: A Commissioner's Guide to Position Impact**

**Handout or have groups scan the QR code on the screen.**

This guide provides the unit commissioner with a detailed approach to having focused conversations that will result in meaningful contacts.

- **Pre-Connection Preparation:** This includes steps such as reviewing unit data (metrics), identifying topics, scheduling the connection and preparing questions.
- **During the Unit Connection:** This involves working with the Unit Key 3 to review data together, discuss, brainstorm, determine actionable steps, identify resources and next steps, and scheduling follow up.
- **Post-Unit Connection:** This includes documenting the visit, making appropriate follow-ups, and continued support to the unit.
- **Key Considerations:** Such as focus on strengths, empowering unit leaders, patience, and confidentiality.

By following this process, commissioners can effectively support units in identifying challenges, developing solutions, and strengthening their programs.

### **Unit Metrics (Slide 14)**

**The first thing a unit commissioner must do is get to know the unit and its people. This may take several visits.** Unit metrics are an objective starting point for discussions after a relationship is established.

Unit metrics provide insight into a unit's overall status, enabling you and the unit's Scouters to collaborate and improve the unit's ability to deliver the promise of Scouting. They are **not** intended to compare one unit to another or to provide a "score".

The unit metrics chosen provide an objective and valuable means of identifying how a unit is performing, enabling commissioners a convenient method to provide focused help where it is needed.

This information is available on the unit's dashboard which is available in Commissioner Tools.

### **Unit Metrics Chart (Slide 15)**

#### **Handout: Unit Metrics Chart – 1 per person**

These objective metrics are determined using thresholds established for average expectations. Variation from these thresholds is not necessarily 'good' or 'bad.' **Metrics are not scores.** They identify opportunities to provide helpful guidance where needed. Discussing only one or two metrics with a unit leader to explore where help might be required could be very beneficial. However, discussing those where they're going well is also essential. Everyone needs to know that you also notice the positive things.

This chart displays five metrics, covering each of the five Scouting America programs, and describes thresholds based on average expectations. Each metric and threshold was established based on a relationship with unit renewal. The sixth metric of retention is part of the unit's dashboard information.

Note, for example, Key Leaders Trained. As commissioners, we are typically in contact with the unit's Key 3. When we visit with the unit's Key 3, we should also discuss the direct contact leaders (Cub Den Leaders, Webelos Den Leaders, and their assistants), who are not yet trained, and offer them available training resources. We know trained leaders provide a better program for the youth.

Also note the unit size for Cub Scouts. The threshold is set at 20, which is below the national average of pack sizes. It has been found that units that fell below this threshold are less likely to complete a unit renewal. This size threshold helps to establish a typical den unit for each grade level with at least 3-4 youth in each den. Similarly, for Troops, a threshold of 12 accommodates two patrols of 5 youth. Still, it enables the opportunity for the senior patrol leader of the youth leadership and an assistant, which is fundamental in the Scouts BSA Program.

Data is populated through Scoutbook Plus and other Scouting America systems. The **shaded metrics**, Leadership for Crews and Posts, and Outdoor Activity for all programs, are dependent on what is entered at the unit level. Our technology makes it easy for unit leaders to enter only a date for when the activity occurred via My.Scouting or Scoutbook Plus.

However, it is up to the unit whether to enter that information. What might seem to be a lack of advancement/leadership and outdoor/superactivity **only means no one entered the information, not that those things did not occur.**

### **Connection Guides (Slide 16)**

To aid commissioners in facilitating a conversation with unit leaders, a set of Connection Guides is available. There are guides for discussing each of the six metrics.

**All guides are accessible from the unit and district dashboards**, and each follows a similar pattern of offering several leading questions to help guide a unit-level conversation.

Scanning this QR code will also enable direct access to the library of connection guides.

### **Unit Goals (Slide 17)**

Conversations with unit leaders may lead to opportunities for formulating unit goals.

Establishing goals can be pivotal in the development of thriving units. Commissioners should be prepared to collaborate closely with units to develop goals and address challenges.

This means the commissioner needs to recognize what is going well so that they are ready to aid the unit in pinpointing areas for program improvement. If invited by the unit, the commissioner can engage with unit leaders to help them establish their vision for success and provide support for that vision.

**The unit leadership maintains complete autonomy in determining unit goals, whether they choose to have them detailed, simple, or not at all.** The commissioner is available to assist them throughout the process.

### **Unit Support (Slide 18)**

Finally, commissioners provide unit support by following up regularly, being available to answer questions, and ensuring the unit has the resources to achieve their goals.

Just remember, there are various types of units out there, and each one requires different types of support.

Record what you do to support the units you serve in Commissioner Tools. The information you record is valuable for tracking unit opportunities and success over time. This is also useful to district leadership if you are no longer able to serve that unit; they won't have to start all over to gather information.

## **Summary/Conclusion – 1 minute (Slide 19)**

We've covered a lot of ground in this presentation.

- We've discussed changes in how commissioners should approach unit service
- We have described the components of unit service, and
- We have covered unit conversations, unit metrics, commissioner connections and unit goals

Ultimately, we as commissioners are here to serve the units. Let's be the single best resource for those units.

## **Questions? – 2 minutes**