



Commissioner Newsletter

Your Single, Best Resource.

August 17, 2026 Edition

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” -
James Baldwin

You Have Leads!

As of the most recent report, there are more than 5,335 open leads (an increase of 32% since last week) and 343 pending applications (a decrease of 50% since last week) awaiting follow-up in the online registration system. Each lead represents a family interested in learning more about Scouting, and each pending application is an excited new youth member who has already paid to join and is just waiting for unit approval. Review and take action NOW on this information to help welcome more youth and families into Scouting.

Most Families Find a Unit with BeAScout.org

The new BeAScout experience provides families with key details like meeting times, estimated costs, and unit dues before they make contact. To support these enhancements, new fields have been added to the Unit Pin page in Organization Manager, so even recently updated pins may need additional information. A step-by-step guide is [here](#).

New Member Coordinator

Did you know that contacting a family within 48 hour of joining is one of the single most effective ways to secure long-term retention? Don't let their initial excitement fade into radio silence. Assign a dedicated New Member Coordinator to send a quick text or email welcoming them right away. Learn about that volunteer position [here](#).

Do Your New Cub Families Know When and Where to Meet?

Among the most important information new Cub Scout families need is knowing when their den meets and who they can contact when questions arise. Seems obvious, but we have lost families before they even attended a meeting. Be sure every family who joins a pack receives a copy of [this form](#), or a similar resource, so they feel welcomed, informed, and connected from the very beginning.

New Scouting America Ambassador: Josh Hart

Josh Hart's Scouting journey began as a Tiger and continued through Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA, culminating in earning his Eagle Scout rank just before turning 18. He credits Scouting with shaping the leadership, perseverance, teamwork, and preparedness that define his professional basketball career. As an official ambassador, Hart is encouraging young people to stick with the program, emphasizing that the skills Scouting builds last a lifetime. Find out more [here](#).

National Membership Engagement Committee

The National Membership Committee is now the National Membership Engagement Committee. Follow their [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram account](#) for great ideas, resources, and tips to help grow Scouting and engage more families.

Follow Us On Social Media

Access news as it breaks by following the Commissioners of Scout America's [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram account](#) and help spread the word about Scouting by liking and sharing posts.

Ask a Commissioner

Question:

Can Scouts meet online as a group with a Merit Badge Counselor they do not know personally, as long as the counselor is properly registered?

Answer:

Yes, Scouts may participate in online merit badge instruction with a registered Merit Badge Counselor they do not personally know, provided that all Scouting America requirements for merit badge counseling and online safety are followed. However, Unit Commissioners should help unit leaders understand both the benefits and potential challenges of this approach.

Online group merit badge sessions can provide Scouts with access to counselors who have specialized knowledge that may not be available locally. This can be especially valuable for less common merit badges, for Scouts in rural areas, or when scheduling with local counselors is difficult. Virtual sessions can also allow Scouts to learn from experts across a larger geographic area while still receiving guidance from a registered counselor.

However, there are also potential concerns. Scouts may miss the personal connection and mentoring relationship that often develops when working directly with a counselor. Large online classes can sometimes become more focused on completing requirements rather than engaging in meaningful learning. Unit leaders should also consider whether the format allows the counselor to properly evaluate each Scout's understanding and individual work.

Unit Commissioners can encourage units to use online merit badge opportunities thoughtfully. Before participating, leaders should confirm that the counselor is currently registered for the specific merit badge, ensure Youth Protection guidelines are followed, and understand how the counselor will interact with Scouts and evaluate completed requirements. The best merit badge experiences combine quality instruction, meaningful interaction, and the opportunity for Scouts to connect with adults who can inspire them beyond simply earning a badge.

A good question for unit leaders to consider is: "Will this experience help Scouts grow, learn, and connect with Scouting values, or is it simply a way to complete a requirement?"

You have questions? Commissioners have answers!

Reach out by email: commissionerserviceteam@scouting.org



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