



Commissioner Newsletter

Your Single, Best Resource.

June 29, 2026 Edition

"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant." - Max De Pree

Unit Commissioner Retention Fast Start Webinar

Commissioners play a vital role in helping units retain youth, families, and leaders by providing support, encouragement, and resources where they are needed most. Join us for a Unit Commissioner Retention Fast Start webinar designed to equip commissioners with practical tools and immediate actions they can use to strengthen unit retention before and during fall recruiting. During the webinar, commissioners will learn more about the national retention focus, explore the Unit Commissioner mindset of "How can I help?" through the lens of the commissioner trail map, and discover a simple action checklist to support packs, troops, crews, and ships. Topics will include helping units build a visible fall calendar, improving new-family onboarding, supporting successful sign-up nights, encouraging parent engagement, and reinforcing a strong, engaging Scouting program. Register in advance for one of the following webinar sessions:

Webinar Option 1: July 7, 2026 (6:00 PM ET | 5:00 PM CT | 4:00 PM MT | 3:00 PM PT)

[\[Register / Click Here to Join\]](#)

Webinar Option 2: July 7, 2026 (8:00 PM ET | 7:00 PM CT | 6:00 PM MT | 5:00 PM PT)

[\[Register / Click Here to Join\]](#)

You will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the webinar.

Announcing a New Role: Commissioner Mentor

The role of a commissioner mentor is to help new commissioners achieve a successful start by providing guidance, encouragement, and hands-on support throughout their first year of service. Mentors assist new commissioners in understanding their responsibilities, developing confidence in working with units, and building strong connections within the commissioner team. By sharing experience, offering coaching, and serving as a trusted resource, commissioner mentors help new commissioners develop the skills, knowledge, and relationships needed to serve effectively and independently. See the job description [here](#).

Scouts BSA SPL Summit Launches This Fall

Scouts BSA is launching the SPL Summit, a new initiative designed to elevate youth voice and strengthen the future of the program. Through quarterly online gatherings, Senior Patrol Leaders from across the nation will have the opportunity to connect with fellow youth leaders, participate in feedback sessions with Scouts BSA national program leadership, learn about upcoming initiatives and resources, and share ideas that help improve the Scouting experience.

By bringing together youth leaders from troops of all sizes and backgrounds, the SPL Summit will create a direct connection between the Scouts who lead their troops every day and the teams shaping the future of Scouts BSA. This initiative reflects Scouts BSA's continued commitment to youth-led leadership and ensuring that young people remain at the center of program development.

Additional details, including participation information and full launch plans, will be announced this summer. The Scouts BSA SPL Summit is expected to launch in September 2026.

A New Pilot is Underway: Squirrels

Chipmunks is a new program designed for children ages 4 and 5. The program introduces families to Scouting earlier through age-appropriate activities focused on play, creativity, connection, and early childhood development. Unlike Cub Scouting, Chipmunks does not include ranks, badges, or formal advancement. Instead, children participate in weekly themed activities and collect stickers that recognize their participation and accomplishments.

Chipmunk groups, called "Scurries," meet weekly in a playdate-style setting led by parent volunteers serving as Scurry Coordinators, with support from council or district volunteers known as Chipmunk Rangers.

The experience is built around storytelling, imagination, and a cast of eight "forest friends" who help teach themes such as friendship, creativity, music, and movement. Through stories, puppets, and hands-on activities, the characters help young children learn foundational skills while preparing for school and building positive social connections.

The Chipmunks program is currently being tested in seven councils and the first participants were registered in April. Feedback from these pilot programs will help shape the future structure, curriculum, and expansion of the program. Learn more [here](#).

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: I understand that at the 2026 National Annual Meeting, an announcement was made that adults aged 18 and older will be eligible to register as unit commissioners, assistant district commissioners, assistant council commissioners, and roundtable commissioners. Why is dropping the minimum age from 21 to 18 a good thing?

Answer: Dropping the minimum age for commissioners is a positive step because it expands the pool of capable volunteers and helps Scouting America keep talented leaders engaged at a time when their connection to the program is strongest.

This change is not about lowering expectations or replacing experienced commissioners. An 18-year-old commissioner is an adult volunteer who will have the same responsibilities, standards, training expectations, and safeguarding requirements as any other commissioner. The role does not change. What changes is creating an earlier opportunity for qualified adults to serve.

Scouting has already invested years developing youth leadership skills. Many young adults already understand unit operations, the patrol method, youth leadership, and program delivery because they have served as youth leaders, NYLT staff, Order of the Arrow leaders, Venturing leaders, or other key volunteers. This change creates a new pathway for them to continue serving.

The need is real. Many councils and districts need more commissioners to provide stronger support to units. More commissioners means better unit coverage, more consistent coaching for leaders, and stronger support for healthy programs. This directly supports the Commissioner Trail Map, especially the focus on Commissioner Onboarding and Engagement by improving recruitment, onboarding, mentoring, and retention.

Experienced commissioners remain essential. Their relationships, judgment, and knowledge are critical. This change adds capacity and creates an opportunity for experienced commissioners to help develop the next generation of leaders.

The goal is not to put inexperienced adults into roles without support. Councils and districts will continue to make thoughtful decisions about readiness, assignments, mentoring, and introductions. With proper support, these new commissioners can bring valuable perspectives, recent program experience, and a strong connection to the future of Scouting.

Ultimately, this change helps Scouting retain leadership talent, strengthen unit service, and ensure more units have the support they need to succeed.

You have questions? Commissioners have answers!

Reach out by email: commissionersserviceteam@scouting.org



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