


2025

Growing & Strengthening Our Unit Service Teams



Commissioner Engagement
National Commissioner Service Team
April 2025

Purpose & Priorities

 When was the last time you had an **Aha! Moment** – a sudden insight, a flash of inspiration – that gave you a new understanding, encouragement, and confidence, spurring you to take immediate action? As Scouters, you probably have more of those moments than the average person. We hope that the ideas in this guide will lead you to exciting and actionable **Aha! Moments** – and that you’ll share your thoughts and actions so we can all catch the excitement!

This guide was developed to assist districts and councils in creating a comprehensive plan to seek and invite commissioners. The methods are not designed individually but mixed and matched to create a comprehensive, tailored approach for each council/district’s needs. The core concepts of this guide are meant to fully support existing and new resources, including, but not limited to, commissioner deployment methods, unit connection guides, commissioner culture and priorities, etc.

Please keep the following thoughts in mind as you use this guide:

- In everything we do as administrative commissioners, we must strive for maximum positive impact. How can we make the best use of our resources – and find the additional resources we need – to do that?
- When seeking and inviting commissioners, we must prioritize a heart of service above everything discussed in this guide. Does each prospective invitee show the capability to “Be the Heart” we expect as part of our unit service culture?
- We are always looking for “Commissioner Fit” in the broadest sense to have the right person in place for the partnerships we want to develop. How can past experiences, heritage, language, race or ethnicity, education, skill set, knowledge, personality, and age (and the list goes on) help a person connect with others, provide the support that the unit requests, and feel personal satisfaction in the relationships created?
- Inviting new members to strengthen your team is an ongoing process.



There is no one-size-fits-all (or even most) method and no magic wand for creating a comprehensive plan; however, we hope these concepts help you create a customized solution for your local commissioner teams.

Additional resources are available on the national commissioner website (<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/>) and in the Resources section at the end of this guide.

Finally, any questions or feedback can be emailed to us using commissionerserviceteam@scouting.org

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= Try this NEW idea!

This Guide is meant to be read from left to right.

far - left column, approaches to key concepts are in the middle, and ideas for action and ways to get started are in the far

Key concepts are in the





- right column

Key Concepts in the Process	Updated Approaches Putting Concepts into Action		
<p>Start by Creating and Maintaining a Best-Fit Unit Service Culture Focused On:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be the Heart • Build Relationships • Change Lives 	<p>Think How Personal Interactions Within Your Team Can Better Support Units and Teammates</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what message actions send to the units and within our unit service teams. (Avoid negative messaging and encourage actions that send positive messages.) • Help team members feel ownership of the desired unit service culture.
	<p>Pilot a Low-Pressure, Adaptable Environment That Encourages People to Try Out Unit Service </p>	<p>Keep It Simple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with a singular task. For instance, ask commissioners to look at a specific item with a unit, manage a particular data set, share council/national news with units, or serve a single unit. • Sign up new invitees as assistant district commissioners or assistant council commissioners with a specific short-term assignment rather than serving immediately as unit commissioners. • Expand service opportunities for those with limited time and allow better matching of skills and abilities.
		<p>De-Emphasize Role Titles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on specific jobs/tasks and overall impact. • Work to maximize timing flexibility and ability to work in teams/groups. • Build relationships and focus on impact. • Consider subdividing traditional roles into bite-sized pieces.
		<p>Teamwork Makes the Dream Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow more natural coaching relationships. • Pair people with diverse skills and abilities. • Ensure people feel comfortable and supported. • Reduce stress and create a support network.
		<p>Source From Within</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on pre-existing relationships. • Increase relatability with the unit commissioner and unit. • Focus on obtaining unit resources. • Approach finding a new commissioner the same as sourcing a Scoutmaster, committee members, etc., from within a unit. • Find volunteers who have a vested interest in unit success. • Especially effective for high-functioning units.





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Key Concepts in the Process	Updated Approaches Putting Concepts into Action		
		Leverage Wood Badge Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow Wood Badge ticket items to explore interest and fit (e.g., complete Arrowhead Honor to gain an understanding of unit service). ● Create a defined commitment and timetable for people to pilot unit service. ● Tie into Wood Badge themes and values.
		Invite, Pilot Together, & Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a short-duration period to mentor. ● Jointly review to determine the best placement/fit. ● Consider reviewing annually with all individuals. ● Jointly determine if unit service is a good fit or consider other opportunities in Scouting.
Craft an Action Plan Together	Work Together on the “Big Picture” of What Is an Impactful Unit Service Team	Use a Steering Group to Lead and Invite Input and Feedback from Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify visionary individuals and innovators from within and beyond the commissioner team to help develop the vision and goals. ● Welcome ideas from all members of your team so everyone feels ownership.
		Develop an Aspirational Vision for the Unit Service Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider what ideal unit service looks and feels like from the perspective of unit volunteers. ● Consider what ideal unit service looks and feels like from the perspective of commissioner team members.
		Create SMART Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific ● Measurable ● Achievable ● Relevant ● Time-Bound
	Incorporate Process Ideas (see below)	Build Your Action Plan on the Ideas to Best Fit Local Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write the plan down. ● Use the plan template found on the website. (See the Recruiting Plans link at the end of this guide.)
Build Awareness of Unit Service	Become Scouting & Unit Service Ambassadors	Be Highly Visible Inside Scouting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be seen: “If I can see it, I can be it.” ● Attend unit, district, and council events as a commissioner and staff (e.g., <i>event registration, kitchen crew, welcoming and parking at awards dinners, district camporees, merit badge or Scouting universities, and roundtables</i>). ● Demonstrate servant leadership and create connections to create relatability and awareness and break down silos. ● Lead by example to welcome all into Scouting. ● Work to decrease the stigma of commissioners as monitoring/grading.

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Build Awareness of Unit Service (cont.)		Be Big & Bold in the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify easy community integration and partnership opportunities. • Forge connections that benefit units and provide opportunities for future engagement with the district or council (e.g., <i>Participating in parades and public events, accepting opportunities to speak or present at flag ceremonies, using new event spaces for popcorn sales, pinewood derbies, etc.</i>)
		Consider Alternatives to Uniforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build team spirit through shirt choices. Wearing fun and funky shirts is a great way to draw attention! • Consider easily identifiable t-shirts or polo shirts with the unit service logo. • Consider using unit t-shirts when visiting local units. • Learn when alternate uniforms are more practical to reduce cultural stigmas and increase relatability.
Identify Unit Service Needs & Prioritize Potential Impact	Determine Roles Required	Administrative, Roundtable or Unit Commissioners Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classify the types of commissioners needed and the district's unit service method and strategies. • Consider establishing new roles or filling vacant roles based on impact. • Review existing roles to determine redundancies. • Explore subdivision of duties to create impactful but manageable assignments. • Prioritize needs and impact; maybe every unit doesn't need a commissioner assigned. 
	Focus on Skills & Abilities 	General Skills & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek individuals who can listen, learn, and build relationships. • Focus on a servant's heart over Scouting knowledge. • Consider the communication skills required. Is it more important to know the answer or be able to ask the right question to the right person?
		Specific & Specialized Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the advantages of technical, career-affiliated, and language skills needed to relate to units. • Examine if particular cultural, gender, or other factors would help best fit with units. • Review if a unit would value Scouting specialties like training, membership, or camping.
	Connect with the Under-served	Identify Possibilities for Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine possibilities for establishing relationships with communities with little Scouting presence but who could particularly benefit from Scouting.



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	Prioritize Situations 	Make Decisions Based on Projected Impact vs. Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recalibrate priorities based on analysis of situations to determine areas of greatest need, immediate urgency, and long-term impact. ● Understand that not every unit needs or wants a commissioner. ● Focus on units that need support vs. fun to serve. ● Decide how often the unit needs to be visited.
Find Great Prospects	Look in Atypical Places	Connect with Under-Represented Groups 	Connect with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Young Adults: 21–40 who would seek benefits for themselves and others (e.g., <i>the value of Wood Badge in career</i>). Connect with service groups for young adults, including college-affiliated service clubs, fraternities, or sororities. ● Women – including alumnae of Scouting programs, parents, and members of women’s leadership groups. ● Racial/cultural/economic groups.
		Partner with Similar Organizations	Partner with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth-oriented professions (e.g., <i>coaches, counselors, caseworkers, teachers</i>). ● Service clubs (e.g., <i>Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis</i>), Civic leaders, environmental groups, etc. ● Environmental, agricultural/farming, camps/parks. ● Chartered org. volunteers and council board members without unit engagement. 
		Discover Possibilities in Circles of Friends and other Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use Friendstorming strategies to identify and follow through with prospects. ● Make Friendstorming and network-mining a regular part of conversations within your team.
	Use Scouting Resources to Find Great Candidates	Study Circles of Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather community leaders, executive boards, district committees, professionals, charter organization members, and commissioners to identify potential candidates. ● Search for atypical candidates (potentially outside of Scouting) and focus on skills/characteristics versus numbers. ● Think about joint interests, professions, and hobbies for potential candidates.
		Leverage Population Mosaic Tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use My.Scouting’s council and district Membership Tools, which provide information on 72 different subsets of the local population. ● Use that analysis to identify ways to work with your local communities to ensure representation and serve as many youth as possible.


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Find Great Prospects (cont.)	Use Scouting Resources to Find Great Candidates (cont.)	Collaborate with Scouting America Partners to Win As a Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connect with Scouting America Alumni. Use the Spark database: (https://scoutingalumni.org/resources/spark/) ● Forge connections with the Council Alumni Association and local National Eagle Scout Association chairs. ● Seek Wood Badge Association and Camp Staff Association integration opportunities. ● If some of these don't exist locally, consider forming them.
		Collaborate with the Order of the Arrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extend service opportunities. ● Generate opportunities for additional service for Arrowmen while being ambassadors for the OA. ● Offer new paths for young adults to continue to serve.
		Use Reports & Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use existing reports from My.Scouting and your local registrar to help identify candidates. ● <i>Examples:</i> past Eagle Scouts, transitioning leaders, educators/Fredwell Educator Awardees, charter organization members, Distinguished Citizen Awardees, donors from council development staff, operating committees from council boards, and past members.
		Use Scouting Networks to Seek Volunteers Who Want to Retain Scouting Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adults who have exited a previous Scouting role may want to remain connected to the program in a less time—and effort-intensive role. ● Pre-identify candidates to facilitate smooth transitions. ● Use My.Scouting and non-renewed lists to identify potential candidates. ● <i>Examples include</i> Arrow of Light den leaders, Eagle Scout parents, college students and young adults without kids, and previous OA youth leaders.
		Consider Existing Unit Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek unit leader recommendations of potential candidates. ● Consider parents of youth who are aging out or transitioning leaders. ● Value unit knowledge. ● Identify units with large volunteer bases and an active program.

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Personalize and Customize the Invitation to Create a Connection <i>TIP: If you don't know the person well, find someone the candidate understands and respects. It's harder to say no to a friend.</i>	Start (and Keep) the Focus on the Prospect	Share the Candidate's Qualities You Admire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify what motivates the candidate and try to understand why they volunteer. ● Talk with the person about their skills and abilities, helping them to recognize how their talents fit Scouting's needs.
	Present a Strong Value Proposition – Why You Think They'd Want to Help	Explain the Impact Scouting Volunteers Can Have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider creating cue cards with elevator-pitch-style materials (e.g., <i>value added by unit service, why Scouting benefits youth, QR codes for more information/council contacts</i>). ● Relate to community volunteer experiences.
		Share Passion / Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relate to key values of individuals (e.g., <i>service, giving back, developing youth, citizenships, etc.</i>). ● Create personal, tailored invitations to join. ● Briefly explain why you volunteer and share stories highlighting the value it personally brings you.
	Use Non-Scouting Terms (Plain English) to Explain the Commissioner Role, Relating It to the Broader Community 	Equal-Opportunity Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on how Scouting can support youth and families who lack finances, food, employment, and parent involvement.
		Customer Service & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highlight how unit service provides the resources units need, such as connecting people and information.
		Advocate for Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain how unit service supports a unit's needs and works to address their requests.
		Collaborative Problem-Solver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate how the commissioner partners with units to resolve issues, supports units and youth, and provides a listening ear and sounding board.
		Role Model for Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate how Scouting gives youth another adult role model through adult association.
		Adult Service Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe how commissioners create an environment where social interaction is expected, and teamwork is widespread.
	Highlight Personal Growth	Share Benefits of Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on personal mentorship/coaching. ● Give examples of leadership and interpersonal skill development. ● Discuss professional networking opportunities.

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	Make a Personalized, Welcoming Ask	Tailor the Invitation to the Person and Their Interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce how you think this person could make a difference in Scouts' lives and adult leaders' success. ● INVITE the person to join your team and explain why. ● Stress teamwork and support. ● If you receive a seemingly negative response, remember that "no" or "not now" does not mean "never." ● Thank them for their consideration.
Welcome & Onboard	Help People Feel Purposeful, Valued, and Part of the Team	Provide Thoughtful Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider pairing with an experienced team member who is good at mentoring, welcoming, and a team player. ● Personally communicate with teammates regularly.
		Follow the Onboarding Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the onboarding process to help new teammates feel prepared. ● Demonstrate where to look for additional resources but avoid overwhelming information overload. ● Assemble resources to support new teammates.
Celebrate Successes	Recognize Progress	Celebrate as a Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regularly update the team on progress. ● Recognize the contributions of the group. ● Consider recognition for special occasions or milestones.

Supporting Information & Methods

- [The Ask](#)
- [Recruiting Plans](#)
- [Friendstorming](#)
 - Gather different groups of individuals outside our Scouting community (e.g., charter organization members, council/district boards, community leaders, etc.).
- [Roster Review/Mining](#)
 - This method can source task-specific jobs, find people in the community based on skills/attributes, or find people from specific diverse populations.
- [Awards & Recognition](#)
- [Commissioner Job Descriptions](#)
- [Additional Resources for Onboarding](#)
- [Organizing Commissioner Teams](#)
- [Unit Connection Guides](#)