

Winter 2015

THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS



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Why Do a Unit Service Plan?

There's a simple answer to that question: A Unit Service Plan enables commissioners to fulfill their mission to help units better serve more youth through Scouting. But as with most things, it probably isn't quite that simple.

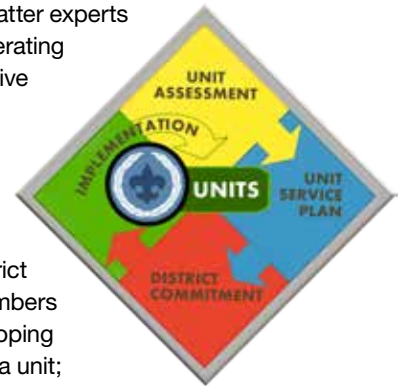
In our last issue, we talked about our efforts to integrate people, process, and technology to improve unit service. Commissioner Tools will soon be in use in every council in the BSA; the Unit Service Plan is a fundamental component of its design.

A Unit Service Plan provides **focus**. It is built upon a *collaborative* assessment of a unit's strengths and needs. Before attempting a collaborative assessment, a unit commissioner must establish a solid relationship with a unit's leaders based on mutual respect and an understanding of one another's motivation for involvement in Scouting and vision of future success for the unit. Once completed, a *collaborative* assessment enables unit leaders and their unit commissioner to identify and prioritize specific tasks that will strengthen the unit most quickly. *Collaborative* assessments are a new approach; not all unit leaders are going to immediately understand or, perhaps, accept them. Unit commissioners should do their best to gain acceptance (their relationship with unit leaders will be an asset in that), but each unit needs a customized service plan. Sometimes, the only alternative will be to build that plan based on the unit commissioner's assessment of the unit's strengths and needs. Done well, that should ultimately cause unit leaders to think more highly of unit service and increase their acceptance of a *collaborative* approach to assessment and plan development.

A Unit Service Plan contains **actionable information**. It includes a limited number (typically five to seven) of SMART goals, which are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **R**esource oriented, and **T**ime based. SMART goals identify what is going to be done, who is accountable for the task, and when it is expected to be completed. Since collaborative assessments and unit service plans should be updated at least twice each year, the tasks should be sufficiently limited in scope to enable completion within six months. That enables unit leaders and their unit commissioner to remain focused and best support continuous improvement of the unit.

A Unit Service Plan enables **linkage** to other resources needed to ensure success. Neither unit leaders nor unit commissioners are experts in every element of Scouting. But unit commissioners can

provide access to subject matter experts who serve on our district operating committees. If the collaborative assessment identifies, for example, specific needs for training of youth and/or adults, a member of the district training committee would be able to assist. District membership committee members could be a resource in developing new approaches to growing a unit; district camping committee members could assist a unit interested in developing a high-adventure program for its older youth; and so on. Once the need is identified, the unit commissioner can facilitate linkage.



Integrating the Unit Service Plan process and Commissioner Tools' technology provides **efficiency**. The *collaborative* assessment and the resulting plan can both be captured in Commissioner Tools using the Detailed Assessment function. Once completed, that information is easily accessible by the unit commissioner, all members of the district's unit service team, and also district professionals. In addition, members of the council's unit service team and field service professionals can review the plan if their support is needed. The Unit Service Plan offers the opportunity to replace the variety of other, uncoordinated unit assessment and unit service planning tools with a single, coordinated approach to helping our units better serve more youth through Scouting. Finally, the Simple Assessment function in Commissioner Tools provides a quick and easy way to document plan progress. Simple Assessments document regular, monthly contacts by a unit commissioner. Unit contacts recorded in Commissioner Tools should involve substantive interaction with unit leaders that ensures Unit Service Plan progress or addresses some other significant unit need.

The simple answer to the question remains: A Unit Service Plan enables commissioners to fulfill their mission to help units better serve more youth through Scouting. And in the process, it enables improved retention of traditional units and improves the performance rating of units using Journey to Excellence metrics. It truly is a better way to provide unit service!



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Commissioner Tools Council Implementation Progress

We are pleased to announce that as of February 1, 124 councils all across the country have converted from the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS) to the new commissioner unit contact reporting tool called Commissioner Tools. We will have another 67 councils in March.

After June 1, 2015, the BSA will no longer support UVTS.

We are currently giving the remaining councils the opportunity to opt in to Commissioner Tools for the months of April and May. In order for your council to be fully prepared for conversion, we ask that you and your council commissioner let us know by **February 15, 2015**.

If your council still needs to submit your choice of dates to start using Commissioner Tools, [click here](#) to access the form. Send your communication to commissionertools@scouting.org. Be sure to spell this address correctly.

You will receive a confirmation and access credentials to the "sandbox" once the form has been received.

We look forward to providing you with exceptional service using this new application through *my.Scouting.org*. If you have any questions or concerns or you need help, please communicate to us through commissionertools@scouting.org.



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Why Use Commissioner Tools?

Commissioner Tools was developed to enable commissioners to provide unit service quicker and more efficiently. While the data from UVTS will be retained, UVTS will no longer be available to councils once they convert to Commissioner Tools.

The mission of unit service is to help units better serve more youth through Scouting. To accomplish that, commissioners must accomplish four objectives:

1. Support unit growth through the Journey to Excellence.
2. Contact units and capture their strengths and needs in Commissioner Tools.
3. Link unit needs to district operating committee resources.
4. Support timely charter renewal.

Commissioner Tools was designed to help commissioners fulfill their mission by providing benefits in four areas:

1. Enabling easy access to actionable information

Commissioners, in real time, will use dashboards to view summary information about a unit's membership, the status of its leaders' Youth Protection and position-specific training, their participation in district roundtables, and the unit's current needs and opportunities to improve performance. As additional *my.Scouting* Tools are released (such as Advancement and Charter Renewal), commissioners will also have direct access to that information.

2. Enabling improved focus on their primary objectives

Commissioners will be able to work together with a unit's Key 3 to develop a Unit Service Plan: an assessment of the unit's strengths and needs and a prioritized list of action items, including accountability and target dates for completion. Completion of those tasks will enable continuous improvement in planning and budget, membership, program, and volunteer leadership. Through ongoing unit contacts, commissioners will be able to identify unit needs and capture periodic updates of the collaborative assessment of unit health and ensure the plan for improvement is moving forward.



Larry Chase
National Commissioner Service
Recruitment and Retention Chair
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3. Supporting roundtable administration and promotion

Roundtable commissioners will be able to publish dates of upcoming roundtables, agendas, and unit participation information, and note key developments. That will enable unit commissioners to effectively promote participation.

4. Supporting commissioner administration

Administrative commissioners will be able to assign unit commissioners and identify their training needs, and identify units that need a commissioner assigned. They will also be able to identify newly formed units so they can be assigned a dedicated new-unit commissioner.

Reports will be available online and can be downloaded in Excel format.



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All of Commissioner Tools' benefits are available to all district and council commissioned professionals. They, too, are encouraged to become familiar with it and use it to support volunteers more effectively.

Simply stated, Commissioner Tools is a better way to:

1. Improve the retention rate of traditional units.
2. Support implementation of the Unit Service Plan through detailed assessments and an increased number of significant unit contacts.
3. Improve the performance rating of units using Journey to Excellence metrics.



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What Commissioner Tools Success Looks Like

Early Indicators

1. Percentage of units with assigned commissioners
2. Percentage of commissioners entering unit contacts
3. Percentage of units with Simple Assessments
4. Percentage of units with Detailed Assessments

Ultimate Indicators

1. Retention rate of traditional units
2. Performance ratings of units using Journey to Excellence metrics
3. Percentage of unit leaders with current Youth Protection training
4. Percentage of unit leaders with current position-specific training
5. Percentage of traditional units completing charter renewal in a timely manner



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The Need to Recruit Hasn't Changed—Or Has It?

Visiting our local councils is a great experience! The commitment and enthusiasm of our commissioners is energizing—and their questions are often thought-provoking.

By now, you probably know that the 2015 unit service Journey to Excellence goals for districts and councils include significant changes. One is the elimination of the traditional 3-to-1 ratio (an average of three units served by each commissioner). That raised an interesting question during a recent visit: “What are you really telling us? Are commissioners less important?” An interesting perspective—and far from the intent of the change.

Consider this: The ratio objective was replaced with a unit retention objective. For years we've said that commissioners “own” retention. In 2015, we're going to measure the **impact** of the work we do. That's a good thing. Unit retention is critical to Scouting's success, and that means commissioners are important.

Or this: Our simple and unified approach to unit service calls for us to “provide an **adequate** number of trained commissioners who provide a link to district committees in support of a quality unit program.” “Adequate” isn't defined; that was intentional. The needs of each unit service team in our local councils will determine the “adequate” number of trained commissioners to help our units better serve more kids through Scouting.

In our last issue, we talked about the five “P's” of recruiting commissioners: **Preparation, Passion, Potential, Priorities**, and **Poaching**. An “adequate” number of trained commissioners has a lot to do with **Priorities**. Even the most dedicated commissioner's obligations at home or at work may make it impossible to take on three units. Our single greatest challenge in unit service is sustaining new units and, as a result, the [Unit Performance Guide](#) methodology calls for us to assign a dedicated unit commissioner to each new unit for its first 36 months. **Priorities** may require more commissioners to serve units effectively.

Unit service is all about impact. By changing our performance metric to unit retention, rather than the ratio of units to commissioners, we're focusing on the **impact** commissioners should have on the units they serve. In Scouting's second century, unit service is more important than ever, and that's exactly what this change tells us.

The need to recruit commissioners hasn't changed. It's continuous. Use the five “P's” to ensure we have an “adequate” number of them.



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What's In and What's Out for 2015



Darlene Sprague
National Commissioner Service
Resources Chair
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What Is Out	What Is In
UVTS	Commissioner Tools
The Annual Commissioner Service Plan	Unit Service Plan
Unit Self-Assessment Commissioner Assessment	Collaborative Assessment
Commissioner Worksheets	Simple Assessments Detailed Assessments
Unit Key 2	Unit Key 3
"visits"	"contacts"—meaningful contacts
3:1 ratio of units to commissioner	An adequate number of trained unit commissioners who provide a link to district operating resources in support of a quality unit program
	Unit Performance Guide
	Commissioner impact on unit retention
	Unit program plan included in JTE measure
Old commissioner logo 	New commissioner logo 
2013–2014 roundtable guides	2014–2015 roundtable guides
Old Commissioner College roundtable course	Seven new Commissioner College roundtable courses
Uniform inspections	Meaningful contacts



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Questions and Answers

How often is the “Upcoming Commissioner Colleges” information updated?

The website posting of the Upcoming Commissioner Colleges is updated three times each year: in February, May, and October. Deadlines for getting information posted are January 1, April 15, and September 15. Send the following information to darsprague@roadrunner.com: council name, city, and state; date and time of event; event location with address; contact information; and a Web link or PDF file with details of the event.

The number of colleges reported has grown immensely in the year or so we have started publishing this list. This month's listing is our largest yet with more than 30 colleges between now and December. We are hopeful that the new training resources posted 18 months ago have inspired all of you to conduct a college.

Will the blank assessment forms be available on the website?

Yes. We are in the process of getting the PDF versions extracted from the Commissioner Tools, and will post them on the Commissioner Manuals and Resources page. In addition, we will be posting some assessment exercises for training purposes on the Commissioner Manuals and Resources page.

What about the manuals?

Now that Commissioner Tools has been released and the Unit Service Plan finalized, the team will be updating all of the chapters in the old manuals, converting them to modules, and placing them on the Commissioner Manuals and Resources page. As you might imagine, there are quite a few changes to these resources. We will be simplifying and, of course, unifying them with all of our best practices. The new modules will let you build your own “reference guide” by selecting the modules most important to your position.

Do commissioners have a social media presence?

Yes. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Get commissioner announcements on social media first!

Do you have a question for the National Commissioner Support Team? Send your questions to darsprague@roadrunner.com at any time. Those that are of general interest will be used in this column.



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Commissioner College Schedule

The College of Commissioner Science program is a great way to get additional training. The Commissioners website provides a listing of colleges of commissioner science that we receive information about.

Please check the [Upcoming Commissioner Colleges](#) list if you would like to experience a college outside of your area or if your council does not currently run a college.

Note: To have your council's college listed, please send information to Darlene Sprague at darsprague@roadrunner.com.



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All Market Resources for Commissioners

There are some great all market resources now available for commissioners on the BSA website at [www.scouting.org/Home/Membership/Cultural Marketing.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Home/Membership/Cultural_Marketing.aspx). This information will help unit commissioners be better prepared to serve all markets. Here you will find information and resources with an emphasis on:

- [African American Focus](#)
- [American Indian Focus](#)
- [Asian American Focus](#)
- [Hispanic/Latino Focus](#)
- [Council Needs](#)
- [Juvenile Diversion](#)
- [Single Parent](#)

These resources include fliers for recruiting, videos, cultural information, bilingual literature, and best methods that are available from other councils.



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Underserved Markets Chair
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Save the Date for 2015 National Outdoor Conference

All those who are involved in supporting outdoor programs are invited to the National Outdoor Conference October 14–18, 2015, at the Philmont Training Center. Click [here](#) for more information.



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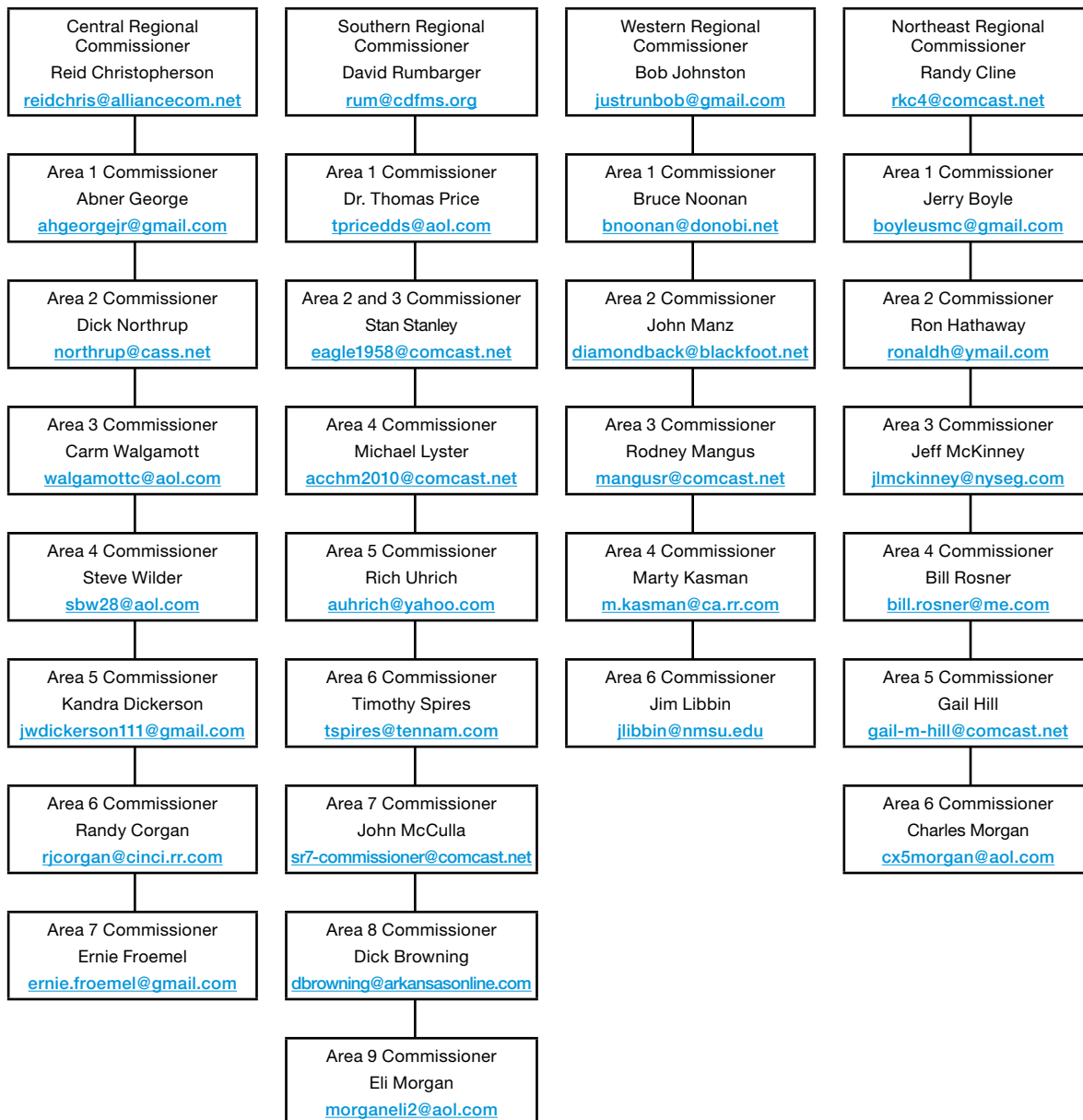
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Regional and Area Commissioners Organization Chart



Updated September 29, 2014



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Coming Events

February 2015—May 2015

February 8

Scout Sunday

Scouting Anniversary

February 9–11

National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

DFW Marriott North, Irving, Texas (by invitation only)

February 14

Scout Sabbath

March 1

Councils go live on Commissioner Tools

April 1

Councils go live on Commissioner Tools

May 1

Councils go live on Commissioner Tools

May 20–22

National Annual Meeting and National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, Georgia

June 1

UVTS is no longer available



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National Commissioner Minute

The commissioner corps is off to a roaring start in 2015. As of February 1, 124 councils are live on Commissioner Tools with the remainder of our councils to follow as we move forward. You will see ample coverage of the Tools launch elsewhere in this issue and on the national website, but now is a good time for a reminder about some of the core reasons behind Commissioner Tools.

In designing the Tools, we continually asked about the needs of unit commissioners and how we could make their role easier and more rewarding. Commissioners told us that we needed a better tool than UVTS to measure unit visits, and that technology should help us communicate the needs of those units within the district and council. We crafted a "simple and unified" technology platform to make unit visits more effective. The Tools eliminates a lot of paperwork while streamlining the planning process. The planning process now results in a coordinated Unit Service Plan that captures what we need for each unit to be successful. At the same time, you need a wealth of information to serve your unit. That information is now readily available to our volunteers through Tools, alleviating the need to go through your local council office for information.

The 2015 Journey to Excellence standards for unit service have been integrated with Tools and have been revised to focus on areas that matter. Unit retention is a separate criterion, recognizing that it is our most fundamental measure of success. Another JTE standard measures the number of unit visits (now called contacts), but more significantly encourages a detailed assessment to help the unit develop the Unit Service Plan. The 3-to-1 unit-to-commissioner ratio has served us well, but it is time to more directly focus on how many units have been contacted. As a result, you will see less focus on the familiar 3-to-1 ratio. The JTE standard now focuses on number and quality of unit contacts, and not the number of commissioners.

In the coming months, you will see new and enhanced resources to support Tools. We are in the process of revising all of the support publications, general and subject matter training courses, and College of Commissioner Science courses to reflect the arrival of Tools and the new JTE standards.



Tico Perez
National Commissioner

The commissioner mission of retaining our units remains the same. We still want to focus on Four Things that we know will drive unit retention:

1. Drive improvement in Journey to Excellence performance.
2. Contact units and record the data in Commissioner Tools.
3. Identify and link unit needs to the resources of the district and council.
4. Renew that unit's charter!

We welcome your feedback on these and many other tools, methods, and resources. I hope that you share my enthusiasm about commissioner service in 2015 and beyond.

God bless.



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A Different Take on the Millennial Generation

We are missing a key point about the millennial generation. You have, no doubt, seen countless articles that describe the challenges in reaching various generational groups. I have heard too often that perhaps the millennial generation—those under 30 for these purposes—are less likely to be involved in community groups.

What if I suggested to you that the millennial generation is more serious about giving back than their parents? What would you think if the data suggested that millennials are passionately committed to improving their local communities in meaningful ways? A recent survey by the Associated Press-GfK found that those under 30 are more likely to say that citizens have a “very important” obligation to volunteer. The volunteer efforts of past generations peaked when they were in their 30s and 40s, a time when many of these millennials will be raising families and looking for a way to make a difference not only in their children’s lives but also in their community as a whole. That time is now.

The survey tested six obligations of citizenship—volunteering, staying informed about news and public issues, voting, serving on a jury, reporting a crime, and speaking English. Some obligations, such as voting, stayed about the same, while others declined. Only 56 percent felt an obligation to keep fully informed about news and public issues. Among the six activities, volunteering is the only activity that adults under 30 rated as highly as older people. The share who called volunteering “very important” has climbed 10 percentage points, while staying informed dropped 13 points.

The activities most likely to draw those volunteer hours are those that directly impact the lives of people in the local community. It might be a food drive or tutoring a disadvantaged child. What can Scouting learn from these perspectives? If you believe, as I do, that Scouting is local, the analysis suggests that we have a legion of potential volunteers who are wired to give back to their local community. They are looking for opportunities, and if they do not find them, they will create their own. We need to reach that generation—on their terms and through a communications medium that they use—with the Scouting message about giving back to their community by changing the lives of the kids next door.



Scott Sorrels
National Commissioner Service Chair
scott.sorrels@sutherland.com

We have a tremendous opportunity to capture a new generation of Scouting volunteers. We have talked at length about how to engage the next generation of unit commissioners. Too often, those discussions were influenced by the apparent misconception that this next generation was not willing to give back like past generations. Perhaps the underlying premise was incorrect. We need to design local outreach programs that capture the imagination of this next generation. So, as we start 2015, consider this an opportunity to figure out how your local commissioner corps can capture the volunteer passion of this generation. Share with us the local ideas that worked and those that did not, so the task force can capture the best and brightest ideas and share them throughout the organization.



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Commissioner Training Update

The Training Development Team has been very busy! Here is an update on our latest initiatives:

New Roundtable Curriculum for Commissioner Colleges

Seven new courses were added to the Commissioner College national curriculum in support of roundtables. Please see the "New Roundtable Curriculum for Commissioner Colleges" article for more details.

Basic Training

All of the Basic Training courses have been updated by a development team led by Dave Fornadel. The team has incorporated the Commissioner Tools and the new Unit Service Plan as part of the Basic Training updates. You can find them posted on the national Commissioners website under the Training tab.

LDS Commissioner Orientation

The LDS Commissioner Orientation Development Team has just posted the new training module on the national website. This orientation focuses on commissioner service within the LDS church and is available for use by all commissioners. The development team consisted of Larry Gibson, First Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency; Mark Francis, a Scouting professional and LDS liaison on the National Alliances Team; Roma and Wayne Bishop of the LDS church; and Steve Yackel and the development team at Scouting U.

The course will be offered in a manner very similar to Youth Protection training. If you sign in and have a Scouting ID, your training record will be updated upon completion of the course. If you don't sign in, you can still take the training and print a certificate. Take the certificate to your assistant council commissioner for training or council commissioner and they will be able to update your record.



Tim Acree
National Commissioner Service Training Chair
tim.acree@comcast.net

College Courses

All 68 Commissioner College courses as well as the supporting materials in the General folder are being updated. This development team will make sure the course materials contain the most current information.

We also want to provide an outstanding learning experience for every commissioner, whether they were just commissioned or have years of experience.

If you have feedback on how the training can be improved, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner service training chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.



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New Roundtable Curriculum for Commissioner Colleges

Big news for Commissioner College deans, roundtable commissioners, and assistant roundtable commissioners!

In the past, the national Commissioner College course offerings available for roundtable were BCS 107–Roundtable I, BCS 108–Roundtable II, and MCS 314–Administration of Roundtable Staff. These courses were getting very dated and there were not enough of them to offer a full roundtable curriculum. All three of these courses are now discontinued and have been replaced by the following seven new courses.

Number	Course
BCS 150	Roundtables in Commissioner Service
BCS 151	The Roundtable Commissioner
BCS 152	Using the Roundtable Program Guides
BCS 153	Promoting Roundtables
BCS 154	Program Development for Boy Scout Roundtables
BCS 155	Program Development for Cub Scout Roundtables
BCS 156	Recruiting, Training, and Recognizing the Roundtable Team

The courses will be posted under the Training tab of the Commissioners website.

With seven courses, a college dean will now be able to offer a complete Bachelors of Roundtable Science curriculum. The courses reference the new roundtable guides and cover the new roundtable positions—assistant council commissioner for roundtable, assistant district commissioner for roundtable, and assistant roundtable commissioner (rather than roundtable staff).

The courses were developed by Emily Campbell, Meg (Margaret) Eacker, Carla Jones, Jimmy Jones, Daniel Grummert, Robert Takacs, and Dan Maxfield. Dan and his team have reviewed and approved the courses. Thanks to the developers and reviewers for their hard work and support of roundtable commissioner service.



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2015 Commissioner Week at Philmont

Commissioner Week at the Philmont Training Center for 2015 will be Week 2: June 15–21. Faculty has been selected, a kickoff meeting has been held, and plans are being made for another exceptional training event this year. If you have not been to Commissioner Week before, this is the year to go. Last year we received our highest ratings yet from the feedback, and we plan to further enhance the experience.

A new conference titled “Advanced Administration of Commissioner Service” is being offered this year. The conference is open to all region and area commissioners as well as anyone who has attended the “Council Commissioner” course at Philmont. Exceptions to these guidelines can be made by sending an email to Tim Acree. Conference topics will include the significance of leaders, how to build better relationships, aspirations of leaders, mentoring and coaching, and how to leave a legacy of leadership.

If you serve faith-based or non-traditional units, consider attending the “Commissioner Service for Non-Traditional or Faith-Based Units” conference to better understand how to improve your service to those units as well as be exposed to the many offerings available from the BSA for reaching multicultural and underserved markets.

All of the position-specific conferences offered last year will be offered again this year.

Note: An additional “Unit Commissioner” conference will be offered during Week 8: July 26–August 1. If you are a unit commissioner and cannot attend Week 2, please sign up for Week 8.

See the [Philmont flier](#) for more information or go to the [Philmont Conferences page](#). Please consider making a personal commitment to attend one of the conferences offered this year. You will not be disappointed!

If you have any questions about commissioner training, please contact Tim Acree, national commissioner service training chair, at tim.acree@comcast.net.



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2015 Commissioner Workshop at the Sea Base Conference Center

"An Overview of Commissioner Service" was the title of the commissioner training conference held at Sea Base during the week of January 18–24 at the Conference Center in Islamorada, Florida. The conference was taught by Kandra Dickerson, Central Region Area 5 commissioner; Kresha Alvarado, Circle 10 Council assistant council commissioner; and Jeff McKinney, Northeast Region Area 3 commissioner.

This year we had a record attendance of 22 students! Thanks to Kandra, Kresha, and Jeff for facilitating and teaching the conference.



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College of Commissioner Science Dean's Retreat

Mark your calendar now for the first College of Commissioner Science dean's retreat, scheduled for August 28–30 at the Scouting University Westlake Campus in Westlake, Texas.

Topics to be discussed include best practices from Commissioner Colleges across the nation.

Click [here](#) for more information.



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Roundtable Guides Update

As I mentioned in the last issue of *The Commissioner*, development of the 2015–2016 roundtable guides is underway. Results of the roundtable related surveys sent out in September are guiding us in some revisions. Thanks very much to all who participated in the surveys.

Some changes will come with these guides, particularly in Cub Scouting! Since this is a new program in the rollout stages, some of the materials most suited for supporting den and pack leaders need to be modified to reflect these changes. The commissioners who make up the current Roundtable Guide Development Team will be working in cooperation with members of the new Cub Scout Program Design Team to make these materials most current and relevant. This will be an exciting opportunity for all of us that most certainly will result in some interesting outcomes that previously were not available. Also, some supplemental materials that more closely align the current roundtables to the new Cub Scouting program will be available soon.

The bottom line is that you can count on updated and vibrant 2015–2016 Boy Scout and Cub Scout roundtable guides being available by the National Annual Meeting in Atlanta in May.

If you have any roundtable success stories you would like to share or thoughts and comments to pass along, please send them to Dan Maxfield at dbmaxi05@gmail.com.

As always, I remind everyone that good roundtables equal better programs in units, which equal increased youth and unit retention. These are Journey to Excellence goals that roundtable can impact. We hope you are having a great year of super roundtables. The youth in our units deserve the best.



Daniel B. Maxfield
National Commissioner Service Roundtable Chair
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Winter 2015

THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS



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The Technology Link and Roundtable

In the Winter 2014 newsletter, we featured a district using YouTube videos as a roundtable distribution method for Scouters who weren't able to attend. In the Spring 2014 newsletter, we featured a district that does not have access to high-speed Internet service, so it uses technology to create an offline movie approach to roundtable presentations.

Clearly, in some parts of this country there is a lot of technology linkage access, and in other places there is very little. The challenge is finding ways to use technology as a productive roundtable distribution vehicle regardless of which situation you find yourself in. Getting important information to all adult unit leaders is still an important part of our goal.

Good roundtables promote great Scouting. Our youth deserve the best! So let's provide good roundtables to as many as we can in as many different ways as we can.

In the next newsletter, we will feature an article about the BSA's social media guidelines to make sure that whatever we do is ethical and legal.

Share your roundtable delivery experiences (and tips) by contacting Dan Maxfield at dbmaxi05@gmail.com. We would love to spotlight your story!



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Commissioner Tools Best Practices

With each passing month, more councils have gone live with Commissioner Tools, and through their experience our collective knowledge increases. Some councils have decided to make a gradual entry into the Commissioner Tools “pool” by recommending their commissioners get comfortable with the new processes by starting with a few **Simple** unit assessments. Other councils have figuratively walked around to the deep end of the pool, stepped out on the diving board, and plunged right into Commissioner Tools, asking their commissioners to establish a good unit “baseline” by starting with a **Detailed** unit assessment. Though different, these two approaches ultimately yield the same result—full immersion in the Commissioner Tools “pool.”

There are two general types of assessments but many options:

- **Paper or computer.** The first option when making an entry in Commissioner Tools is whether to collect the information on a piece of paper so it can be entered into a computer later, or to make the entry directly into Commissioner Tools while online. For those commissioners who do not have a computer or a good Internet connection, or if they are “computer shy,” the paper route might be best, allowing entry of the information at a later date and perhaps even by another individual on behalf of the commissioner who actually made the contact. An occasional question asked is whether all your work is lost if your computer crashes while you are in the middle of a long Commissioner Tools entry, or something similar happens that disrupts your Internet connection. Fortunately not; Commissioner Tools saves your data as it is entered, data field by data field—which means the most information you will lose is the information for the last data field in which you were entering data.

- **One Simple Assessment, three types of Detailed Assessments.** Through various training we’ve advertised the fact that a commissioner can literally make a Simple Assessment in less than 90 seconds. Each Unit Service Plan group (Planning and Budget, Membership, Program, and Leadership and Governance) in a Detailed Assessment can be completed either unilaterally by the commissioner or collaboratively by the commissioner and the unit Key 3. Look elsewhere in this issue of *The Commissioner* for the article “Why Do a Unit Service Plan?” to learn how a Collaborative Detailed Assessment is key to that process. Even though step one of a Detailed Assessment provides summary information about the unit’s training and



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membership status, completing the seven steps of a Detailed Assessment can be quite involved and time consuming. Did you know that for each of the four Unit Service Plan groups in a Detailed Assessment you can independently create a summary entry? That means you could create a Detailed Assessment with four summary entries, or three, or two, or just one—it’s your choice, and you should make your decision based upon your needs. I like the term “intermediate assessment” to differentiate between completed Detailed Assessments with all the sub-elements and those assessments that use summary entries.

Some have correctly observed that trying to complete a Detailed Assessment with a unit’s Key 3—which is a Collaborative Detailed Assessment—in a single meeting might be too large of an undertaking. When this was first suggested to me, I thought of the old joke about how you eat an elephant—one bite at a time. Did you know that by working with your unit’s Key 3 you could complete a piece of the Collaborative Detailed Assessment over a series of successive sessions, changing the date to the next scheduled contact date and saving the contact as a work in “Progress” each time until you are finished?



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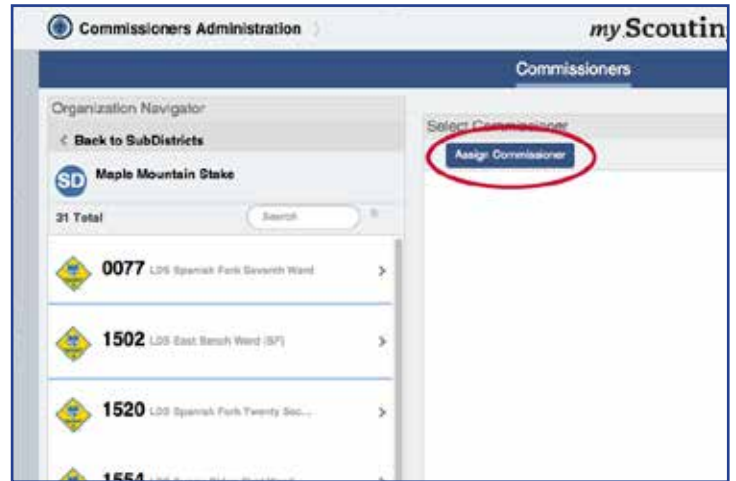
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Summarized, the types of assessments commissioners can use to document their unit contacts are:

- Simple
- Detailed
 - Intermediate with the commissioner summarizing one or more of the Unit Service Plan groups
 - Unilateral with the commissioner completing all Unit Service Plan groups
 - Collaborative where the commissioner works with the unit's Key 3

Within **Commissioners Administration**, when you seek to link a commissioner to a unit you have a choice: You can either assign a commissioner to a unit or assign a unit to a commissioner. While similar, there are some subtle differences.

To assign a commissioner to a unit, first select the unit, then click on the Assign Commissioner button to see the pop-up window of commissioners from which you can select who are in the same district or subdistrict as the unit. Select the commissioner of choice and confirm by clicking on the Assign Commissioner button.



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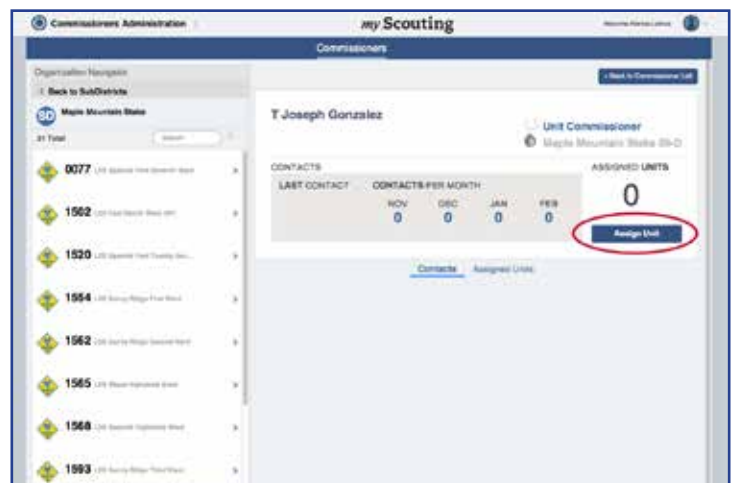


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To assign a unit to a commissioner, first select the commissioner, then click on the Assign Unit button to see the pop-up window of units from which you can select, and then confirm by clicking on the Assign Unit button.

Note that at this time, assigning commissioners across district boundaries can be accomplished only by commissioners whose natural context allows them to see across the district lines, such as an assistant council commissioner.

It is important to keep in mind that the Commissioners Administration module will also allow you to assign multiple commissioners to the same unit, which may be helpful when you have a new commissioner taking over for an experienced commissioner.



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Unit Commissioner Box Score

The Journey to Excellence Key Performance Indicators from December 2014 can be accessed [here](#).

