



# Orientation Guide

for Council Officers  
and Executive Board Members



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

# Orientation Guide

**for Council Officers  
and Executive Board Members**

In appreciation for your forthcoming service  
to youth, this book is presented to

---

With your help, youth will receive a  
quality Scouting program.

This manual was updated in 2010 and provides support as  
a resource for a new Council Executive Board Orientation  
Workshop. See the description on page 31 of this manual for  
more details.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®



# Table of Contents

<b>Why We Serve . . . . .</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Responsibilities of Council Officers . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Scouting—A Resource for Community Organizations . . . . .</b>	<b>6</b>	President. . . . .	15
<b>The Mission of the BSA Local Council . . . . .</b>	<b>7</b>	Council Vice Presidents. . . . .	15
Membership/Relationships: Making Scouting Available to All Youth . . . . .	7	Treasurer. . . . .	15
Finance: Providing Adequate Funds . . . . .	7	Council Commissioner . . . . .	16
Program: Maintaining Standards and Policies . . . . .	8	Scout Executive . . . . .	16
Unit Service: Serving Organizations that Use the Scouting Program . . . . .	8	<b>About the Boy Scouts of America. . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Council Organization. . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>	Local Council Representatives . . . . .	17
The Council Concept . . . . .	9	National Annual Meeting . . . . .	17
The Council . . . . .	9	National Financing . . . . .	17
Responsibility to Serve All Sections of the Territory . . . . .	9	National Office Services . . . . .	18
The Principle of Volunteer Responsibility with Professional Guidance . . . . .	9	Regional Organization . . . . .	18
The Districts. . . . .	10	Multilevel Support. . . . .	18
<b>The Executive Board . . . . .</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>More About the Local Council . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
Specific Duties . . . . .	11	Chartered Local Councils . . . . .	19
Executive Board Meetings. . . . .	11	Chartered Organizations. . . . .	19
Board Membership . . . . .	12	Nominations and Elections . . . . .	19
The Executive Committee . . . . .	12	District Organization . . . . .	20
<b>Reflections on Board Membership . . . . .</b>	<b>13</b>	Youth Membership . . . . .	20
Why You Were Selected . . . . .	13	Local Council Annual Meeting . . . . .	20
What Is Expected of You . . . . .	13	Recognition Dinners . . . . .	20
A Special Working Relationship . . . . .	14	Eagle Recognition Dinner . . . . .	20
		Strategic Long-Range Planning . . . . .	21
		Legal Counsel. . . . .	21
		Employees' Salaries . . . . .	21
		Measures of Effectiveness . . . . .	21

**Interpreting the Local Council's  
Finance Program. . . . .22**

Sources of Local Council Income . . . . .22

United Way Funding for  
Local Councils Today. . . . .22

Who Pays for Scouting . . . . .24

**Guidelines for Council Presidents . . . . .25**

Congratulations, Mr. President . . . . .25

The Council President as a Leader. . . . .25

What Some Council Presidents  
Have Done . . . . .25

Getting Started. . . . .26

Volunteer-Professional Relationship. . . . .26

The Council President and the Public. . . . .27

Emergency Public Relations . . . . .27

The Council Financial Program . . . . .27

Participation of the Council President . . . .28

**Guidelines for Council Commissioners . . . .29**

A Scouter Extraordinaire. . . . .29

Getting Started. . . . .29

Priorities for Council Commissioners. . . . .29

Key Resources . . . . .30

Key Calendar Items . . . . .30

**Ideas for Board Member Orientation . . . .31**

Use of the Council Executive  
Board Orientation Workshop . . . . .31



## Why We Serve

It is the purpose of the Boy Scouts of America to provide boys and young adults with an effective program designed to instill desirable qualities of character, to train youth in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop in them personal fitness, thus to help in the development of American citizens who

- Are physically, mentally, and emotionally fit
- Have a high degree of self-reliance as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage, and resourcefulness
- Have personal and stable values based firmly on religious concepts
- Have the desire and skills to help others
- Have a desire to learn the principles of the American social, economics, and governmental systems
- Are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage
- Have a keen respect for the basic rights of all people
- Are prepared to fulfill the varied responsibilities of participating in and giving leadership to American society and in the forums of the world

The Boy Scouts of America accomplishes this purpose by making its program available to organizations and groups that have compatible goals, including religious, educational, civic, fraternal, business, labor, and governmental bodies.



# Scouting—A Resource for Community Organizations

Community-based organizations vitally concerned with youth should understand Scouting as a resource program for *them*, not as something that they “sponsor” for the Boy Scouts of America.

Following incorporation in 1910, the Scouting movement became increasingly popular throughout America. The Congress of the United States recognized Scouting’s potential as an educational resource for groups interested in a positive program for youth. Congress, representing the people of the United States, granted a charter to the Boy Scouts of America in 1916 to make its program available *through community-based organizations*.

Under the authority of its congressional mandate, the Boy Scouts of America issues two kinds of charters in each local council area.

One type of charter is issued to a BSA local council to: (1) provide service to help chartered organizations be continuously successful in their use of the Scouting program, and (2) extend an invitation to other community groups to use the program and to interpret how it will help them.

The second type of charter is issued to chartered organizations for each pack, troop, team, ship, or crew that they operate.

A district, which is a geographic subdivision of a BSA local council, has these same two responsibilities in the council it serves. The district is the structure closest to the organizations, families, and youth who benefit from the program; therefore, the district is a crucial part of the total Scouting structure—“If it doesn’t happen in a district, it doesn’t happen.”

It may be helpful to consider Scouting in two ways:

1. As the *programs* of the Boy Scouts of America—Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, Sea Scouting, and Venturing—that instill desirable values in youth.
2. As the *support service* of the Boy Scouts of America—delivered to community-based organizations and groups by the local council through its district operation—all for the purpose of assisting the chartered organizations that use the program. The local council receives additional support from the National Council through the BSA’s regional structure.

The history of the Scouting movement holds the key to its purpose and success. When Scouting is properly understood as a resource program, community-based organizations will use it more effectively. When a quality program is delivered, more youth will join.



# The Mission of the BSA Local Council

A BSA local council is a voluntary association of citizens, including representatives of organizations chartered by the Boy Scouts of America, to promote the Scouting program within a geographical area.

It is the council's responsibility to provide leadership and supervision for all program activities within the territory covered by its charter in such a manner as to ensure compliance with the provisions of the *Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America* and the *Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America*.

The local council is an administrative organization charged with fulfilling the purpose of the movement. Scouting is a volunteer movement that operates with professional guidance. This plan divides the administration of Scouting into workable segments in terms of geography, volunteer personnel, finances, and professional guidance.

Four major functions help a council deliver the Scouting program: **membership/relationships, finance, program, and unit service**. These four functions and all other responsibilities are accomplished in each council in a manner that is influenced by local conditions and circumstances. How a council organizes to carry out and sustain this plan in the most efficient way is determined by its size, the resources available, its present structure, and other local factors.

## Membership/Relationships: Making Scouting Available to All Youth

Local councils are chartered to serve community organizations and involve an increasing number of youth in a quality program of Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, Sea Scouting, and Venturing.

Council membership growth occurs in five ways, and all are needed for healthy growth:

1. Organizing new units
2. Recruiting new members to existing units
3. Guiding program transition
4. Stopping dropped units
5. Increasing tenure—more youth reregistered during unit charter renewal

## Finance: Providing Adequate Funds

One condition when granting a charter to a BSA local council is willingness and ability to provide adequate budgetary resources to deliver a sustainable council operation. The council should also have pride in meeting all its obligations on time. Just as the council is a method



of mobilizing people and organizational resources, it is also a method of mobilizing local dollars for the successful and sustainable operation of the Scouting program.

### **Program: Maintaining Standards and Policies**

The local council is responsible for helping the chartered organization run a successful unit or units, building Scouting into the organization's own program so that the organization profits from the relationship. On the other hand, the council makes sure that the chartered organization lives up to its agreement to observe BSA policies and maintain a quality program.

The BSA places special emphasis on qualified leadership. The council must take care in restricting the leadership to men and women who are willing to subscribe to the principles set forth in the Scout Oath and Law.

The program function includes responsibility for volunteer training, outdoor programs, activities and civic service, advancement, and recognition.

### **Unit Service: Serving Organizations that Use the Scouting Program**

The local council is responsible for guiding the chartered organization in carrying out a successful Scouting program. The **unit service** function provides direct coaching and consultation by district volunteers for unit adults to help ensure the success of every Scouting unit.

Unit service is provided largely through a district commissioner staff. This team of unit specialists and roundtable specialists helps ensure a quality program for all the youth in its assigned units. Commissioners help keep units alive and healthy. Unit commissioners maintain the most direct contact with units. Assistant district commissioners help the district commissioner guide the commissioner staff.



# Council Organization

## The Council Concept

Scouting is organized with the conviction that men and women in different communities will work together to serve youth through Scouting.

The mainspring of the council idea is the willingness of organizations and leading citizens within a given area to cooperate in serving youth through Scouting. The council acts as an association of chartered organizations with men and women who are interested in all youth in the council area. It is incorporated for the territory covered by its charter to fulfill the purposes of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Scouting movement is democratic and gains strength insofar as the men and women who direct it are chosen carefully to represent the various segments of the community.

## The Council

The governing body is called the council. The council is made up of chartered organization representatives who represent each organization chartered to operate units. There are also members-at-large elected by the council from a slate presented by the council nominating committee. The council meets once a year, but special meetings may be called to handle special business.

The chartered organization representatives speak for the organizations that have already undertaken the operation of units. Council members-at-large reflect the thinking of every segment of the council territory—religious, cultural, civic, veteran, fraternal, educational, agricultural, industrial, and labor groups.

The council must include the corporate and community leadership necessary to identify resources, secure financial support, and make those major decisions that face a council. In essence, the council membership is a cross section of the citizenry of the area—volunteers banded together in a joint effort to serve youth.

## Responsibility to Serve All Sections of the Territory

The council is committed to serving all sections of its territory. It encourages acceptance by volunteers of their responsibility for making Scouting available to all youth within their area.

## The Principle of Volunteer Responsibility with Professional Guidance

The policy of maintaining Scouting as a volunteer movement finds full expression in the organization and operation of the council. Its members, officers, executive board members, and committee members are all volun-

teers with the exception of the Scout executive. Within the limits of BSA national policy, they carry responsibility for formulating and executing the plans necessary for promoting Scouting in their area. They determine membership goals, budgets, camp facilities and programs, leadership training programs, professional staff needs, and other details of local council operation. **Scouting in the area prospers in proportion to the stature, vision, and enthusiasm of the volunteers who plan and carry out the local council program.**

One condition for granting a charter to a local council is the employment of a staff of one or more professional Scouters. These professionals serve as coaches and coordinators. They provide the administrative guidance that shapes the work of many volunteers into a coordinated, efficient pattern to get the greatest results from the volunteers' investment of time and effort. They serve as advisers to all officers and committees.

## The Districts

To help carry out the operational mission of the council, the council territory is divided geographically into districts as determined by the executive board. The objectives of the district are to expand opportunities for youth to join Scouting, and to help existing chartered organizations and their units provide a quality program for their youth. The district is responsible for carrying out the sales and service role on behalf of the council. The council is responsible for building strong districts and for helping these districts succeed.

The supervision of Scouting in each district is exercised by the council through a district committee consisting of all council members residing within that district, chartered organization representatives, and district members at large who are elected by the district committee.

Each district committee elects a district chair, vice chair, and other district committee members. The district commissioner is approved by the council executive board on the recommendation of the district nominating committee.

Commissioners are generalists who help units in every phase of Scouting. The district operating committee members are specialists in particular areas such as training, finance, and camping, and they help units when their specific services are required.

The district commissioner staff serves units directly by assigned unit commissioners.

The commissioner staff also conducts roundtables for unit adults. A roundtable is a meeting for unit adults which focuses on unit program and inspiration. It usually includes a practical demonstration of the national program theme for the ensuing month. Separate roundtables are held monthly for Cub Scout leaders, Boy Scout leaders, and Varsity Scout leaders. Venturing leaders attend the Venturing monthly program forum (formerly called the Venturing roundtable).

The district executive, district chair, and district commissioner comprise the district Key 3, which meets weekly, or as needed, to assure proper coordination of the work of the district.

For more detailed information about the four-function plan of district operation, see *The District*, No. 33070.



# The Executive Board

The executive board is a functioning administrative group elected to take the necessary action to achieve the purposes of the council. It establishes the council program and carries out the resolutions, policies, and activities voted on by the council. It determines policy for the council in accordance with its delegated authority, and within the context of the *Charter and Bylaws* and the *Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America*. The board protects the long-range future of Scouting in the community. Council board members play two complimentary but very different roles. First, like the familiar corporate board member, they govern the organization. Unlike the corporate board member, they also sign on as volunteers agreeing to undertake any assignment reasonably asked of them.

## Specific Duties

1. Set the mission of the council and review it from time to time.
2. Be committed to the mission, values, and goals of the Boy Scouts of America.
3. Hire or fire the Scout executive.
4. Fiduciary responsibilities.
5. Quality of the Scouting program.
6. Strategic planning.
7. Fundraising.
8. Board development (nominating committee).
9. Observe conflict-of-interest policies.
10. Attend, participate, and vote at council executive board meetings.
11. Manage council issues from a policy perspective.
12. Work as a team.

## Executive Board Meetings

Executive boards generally meet five or six times per year on a fixed date with one of the summer meetings usually being held in the council camp. Lunch or dinner meetings are often most appropriate.

Executive board agendas usually include reports of the council commissioner, the treasurer, the council operating committee chairs, and the Scout executive. From time to time special committees will need to report. As a general practice, only committees that have something current and important to report should be asked to do so.

The district chairs will be asked to report in some councils. In this case, exercise care so that the council operating committee reports and the district committee reports are not repetitious.

Normally, reports need not invoke much discussion. A council's work is accomplished by its committees and, if these committees are composed of responsible people under respected chairs, their decisions and

actions should be accepted without time-consuming discussion. **The executive board is mostly a decision-making body rather than a discussion body.**

The board should know the council's financial position at all times. If additional funds are needed to meet a council obligation, the board should take the initiative and suggest that the funds be sought. Conversely, if funds are not available for a project that could be eliminated or deferred, the board would suggest this course of action. The board should continually recognize the necessity for maintaining solvency and sustainability in the council.

Membership is another area in which the board can give positive leadership. The basic justification for the council's existence is the organization and maintenance of Scouting units. The board should receive a thorough review of the council's membership standing. This includes a comparison concerning the council and each district in youth members and units against the goals. In addition, the percent of youth served in relation to total available youth (TAY) should be reviewed often.

## **Board Membership**

The membership of the executive board includes:

1. Elected officers of the council.
2. Members who are representatives of various community interests. These members are nominated by the nominating committee and elected at the annual council business meeting.
3. Chairs of the committees of the board.

4. District chairs upon their approval by the board.
5. Not more than two youth members, who shall be registered Boy Scouts or Venturers appointed by the council president with the approval of the board.
6. The Scout executive, who shall have no vote.

## **The Executive Committee**

The executive committee is composed of elected council officers, the Scout executive, who shall have no vote, and others as appointed by the president and as approved by the executive board.

The executive committee acts for the executive board in the intervals between board meetings. The board receives the minutes of such meetings for approval at the next board meeting. The executive committee may not act contrary to action previously taken by the board.



# Reflections on Board Membership

It is important for executive board members to know how Scouting works—its structure and operation. Board membership, however, is far more than the mechanics of the structure and procedures. Following are a few special reflections for board members.

## Why You Were Selected

Each board member is selected because of some skills, experience, and characteristics unique to the individual that match current needs of the BSA local council. There are some qualities common to all board members.

Reflect on the fact that you are

- Committed to the mission of the Boy Scouts of America
- Willing to give time necessary to be an effective board member
- Able to contribute your personal and professional qualities that complement those of other board members
- Committed to the approach and tone of the council's fund-raising efforts
- Skilled at being a team player
- Capable of placing Scouting's purposes and interests above your own professional and personal interests when making decisions as a board member
- Able to contribute financial support to the council consistent with your own means

## What Is Expected of You

The obligations of executive board members extend well beyond attending meetings and participation in group decisions. Each board member is expected to meet standards of personal conduct and commitment on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America that are perhaps higher than those usually expected of other volunteers.

Reflect on these expectations:

1. Know Scouting's mission and follow current trends in how this mission is carried out.
2. Suggest other persons of achievement and distinction who could make significant contributions to the work of the council.
3. Serve in council leadership positions or undertake special assignments willingly and enthusiastically when asked.
4. Bring a sense of humor and balance to the board's deliberations.
5. Ask timely and substantive questions at meetings consistent with your conscience and convictions, while supporting the majority decisions on issues decided by the board.
6. Maintain confidentiality of the executive board sessions, and speak for the council only when authorized to do so.

7. Avoid prejudices and grievances of others, and urge Scouters with grievances to follow established policies and procedures through their committee or staff leadership. (All matters of potential significance should be called to the attention of the Scout executive or the council president as appropriate.)
8. Counsel the Scout executive as appropriate to offer support in possibly difficult relationships with groups or individuals.
9. Serve the council as a whole rather than as a special-interest group or constituency.
10. Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest that might embarrass the board or the Boy Scouts of America, and disclose any possible conflicts to the board in a timely fashion.
11. Maintain independence and objectivity, and do what a sense of fairness and the Scout Oath and Law dictate even though not necessarily obliged to do so by law or regulation.
12. Assist the Boy Scouts of America by implementing Scouting's fund-raising strategies through personal influence with others (i.e., corporations, individuals, and foundations).

## **A Special Working Relationship**

The council executive board and the Scout executive play contrasting yet deeply interrelated roles. The board governs and is focused on policy making and the council's strategic plan. Board members see to it that the council is well managed rather than managing it themselves. The Scout executive makes recommendations to the board and, with his or her staff, manages the day-to-day operations of the council to carry out that policy. He or she accepts responsibility for giving leadership to the achievement of the council's mission, strategic plan, and its annual objectives. The board governs and the Scout executive manages, and the council must clearly distinguish between them if it wants the two to work in harmony for Scouting's success. This relationship is based on mutual trust and open communication, and should be modeled by the council Key 3—the council president, council commissioner, and Scout executive.



# Responsibilities of Council Officers

## President

Ultimate authority for conducting the affairs of the Boy Scouts of America lies with volunteer Scouters. The council president is the top volunteer leader. The Scout executive, as the chief executive officer of the council, is the principal adviser as well as the director of the professional and office staff members.

The council president gives leadership to the establishment of effective operation of Scouting consistent with the *Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America* and provisions of governing documents by the council. The president serves as chair at meetings of the council, its executive board, and its executive committee.

He or she serves as an ex officio member of all committees of the council executive board. The council president works closely with the other council officers and the Scout executive in planning and carrying out Scouting; providing necessary materials and financial resources for council programs; directing, supervising, and evaluating other volunteers; and establishing effective relationships with civic and chartered organizations.

The council president is primarily an administrator and a personnel specialist who helps recruit strong men and women to council leadership, fires their enthusiasm, and welds the individuals into a strong working team.

The council president has a deep sense of accountability and dedication to the purposes of Scouting, the achievement of annual objectives, the strategic plan, and for the financial sustainability and growth of the council.

See "Guidelines for Council Presidents" on page 25 for more detailed guidelines regarding council presidents.

## Council Vice Presidents

The council vice presidents perform functions as assigned by the executive board. In case of the president's inability or failure to make such a designation, the executive board may designate one of the vice presidents to serve as president in the president's absence or inability to serve. Vice presidents may be responsible for such functions as finance, administration, program, and membership/relationships, or as deemed by the council's bylaws.

## Treasurer

The council treasurer is responsible for receiving and holding for disbursement all council funds. The treasurer has a close working relationship with the Scout executive. This person assures that adequate accounting systems are used, that reports on the financial health of the council are made at meetings of the council executive board, that financials are audited annually by a certified public accountant and, in general, makes certain that council internal controls are in working order. Assistant treasurers help as required.



## **Council Commissioner**

The council commissioner leads the unit service function of the council by guiding district commissioners who recruit, train, and guide a staff of commissioners in their respective districts.

This Scouter also acts as the “morale” officer of the council, as its inspirational leader, and promotes the quality of Scouting within Scouting units.

The council commissioner works in close cooperation with the Scout executive. He or she supervises the activities of the commissioner staff, presides at council-wide meetings of district commissioners, and conducts commissioner conferences annually.

This person helps maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America by unit leaders and oversees the unit charter renewal plan of the council so that each unit reregisters on time and with optimum membership. The commissioner reports on unit conditions to the executive board and works with the council president to secure help from council committees in meeting unit needs.

## **Scout Executive**

Although ultimate authority of the Boy Scouts of America is vested in volunteer leaders, a vital part of the movement is lodged in a comparatively small but well-trained group of professional Scouters.

The Scout executive is trained and commissioned by the Boy Scouts of America, and works in cooperation with the region and national office. This person is selected by the council executive board, and serves under its direction.

The Scout executive is the top operating professional, corporation secretary, and executive secretary for all council committees, and may delegate part of this responsibility to members of the professional staff. He or she appoints and supervises all employees of the council subject to the approval of, and under the direction of, the council executive board.

The Scout executive recognizes and is committed to the predominant and vital role of volunteer Scouters at all levels in fulfillment of their responsibilities. He or she maintains standards and continuity of the operation of the Scouting organization and programs.



# About the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America operates under a charter from the Congress of the United States granted June 15, 1916. The rules, regulations, standards, and operating procedures for the administration of Scouting are set forth in the *Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America*, No. 57-491, and *Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America*, No. 57-492. They are restated and supported in your council's incorporation documents and bylaws. Copies of these may be obtained for your use.

## Local Council Representatives

Each local council is entitled to representatives on the National Council. The duly elected president and council commissioner are automatically elected as representatives, plus additional representatives based on the size of the council's traditional membership.

These representatives should be elected with the understanding that their primary responsibility is attendance at the National Annual Meeting of the BSA, and sharing their experience in their local council. They are also expected to attend the annual meeting of their region.

## National Annual Meeting

The National Annual Meeting of the National Council is held in May and is the occasion for the submission and adoption of reports, election of officers and board members, the conferring of Silver Buffalo Awards, and the holding of workshops on various subjects selected primarily to benefit local councils.

The council president, council commissioner, and Scout executive head their delegation, which should include the other council officers and committee chairs in addition to local council representatives. Spouses are encouraged to attend, and special features are planned for their enjoyment.

## National Financing

Sources of national funds include income from annual registration fees, sales of publications and supplies, investments, and national service fees.

The national service fee is determined by the council's total annual salaries paid.

The service fee reinforces the national character of the movement and helps to establish the fact that the local councils are a part of the national movement. This system gives each local council a part in supporting the total organization and is a recognition of the interest and responsibility each local council has in maintaining strong and adequate national unity and support.

The discussion of service fees at the time each local council's annual budget is being prepared creates an occasion for reviewing the national services available to local councils as well as a review of the services received during the past year.

This plan is universally accepted by United Ways and is regarded by them as an equitable basis for the support of the national organization by the local council and, by comparison to the program of other national agencies, represents a very modest reliance on local support.

## National Office Services

Local councils can take advantage of many specialized national office services, including assistance in the following: district-council operation, school and religious relationships, disabilities awareness, registration, urban and rural emphasis, youth protection, computer operations, international Scouting, camping, conservation, engineering (camp and office), health and safety, activities, audiovisual, public relations, personnel services, professional training, finance, field service in low-income areas, commissioner service, high-adventure bases, membership, and volunteer training.

## Regional Organization

There are four regions in the Boy Scouts of America, and each is headed by a regional president. Each region has geographical clusters of councils called areas. Areas are administrative units that provide direct service to local councils. The mission of the region is to be a liaison between the National Council and local councils to achieve the purposes of Scouting and to maintain standards, policies, programs, and procedures established by the Boy Scouts of America. The region is responsible for the effective operation of each of its councils: the proper alignment of councils, sufficient qualified volunteer and professional leadership in each council, and effective program for financing each council.

## Regional Responsibilities

1. To communicate national policy, programs, and information to local councils within regional jurisdiction.
2. To listen to local council volunteers and professionals, and convey to the National Council innovative ideas for strengthening the programs and policies of the Boy Scouts of America.
3. To provide professional and volunteer support to councils to help them meet quality council, district, and unit requirements.
4. To maintain established standards and provide ongoing training to keep volunteers and professionals updated.
5. To serve councils, through areas providing ongoing services, counsel, guidance, mentoring, and support.

## Regional Functions

1. Conduct an annual council progress review for each council. Target index of growth; quality program objectives; and strategic plans.

2. Conduct annual camp visitations to help maintain national standards, and monitor camp long-range plans.
3. Conduct training on an ongoing basis with all council personnel (both volunteers and professionals), to keep them in-tune with changing programs and social needs. This can be accomplished through called meetings of professionals and volunteers at the cluster, area, regional, or national level.
4. Assist councils in maintaining the best, most competent professionals in all councils through the appropriate personnel system.
5. Assist councils in meeting their fiduciary responsibilities as a financially sustainable council, including revenue generation, governance, and fiscal management.
6. Assist councils with administration support and training.
7. Help council volunteers and professionals achieve goals using all the resources available through the region, area, and National Council.

## Multilevel Support

Each support level of Scouting has unique responsibilities and relationships. Consider camping as an example:

The **unit** is directly responsible to its members for providing outdoor activities, including long-term summer camp. The unit should see that every member has an opportunity to attend camp.

The **district** has responsibilities different from the unit. The district promotes camping as an integral part of each troop program, and sells the unit leadership on the importance of long-term camping.

The **local council** has yet another responsibility. The council must provide the camping facility, a camp staff, camp program, food, and promotes standards for health and safety.

The **area** carries out camp visitations on behalf of the region.

The **region** is responsible for ensuring that standards of health and safety are maintained in its councils.

The **National Council** establishes the philosophy of camping, determines the standards for health and safety, develops the curriculum for the training of camp staff members, and provides the initial impetus for Scout camping.



## More About the Local Council

For more detailed information about the operation of a council and its districts, obtain a copy of *The Council*, No. 33071, and *The District*, No. 33070.

### Chartered Local Councils

Local councils are chartered annually by the Boy Scouts of America to administer Scouting within their prescribed territory. Each council agrees to fulfill the basic purpose of the Scouting movement, to maintain BSA standards, to serve chartered organizations, and to comply with the provisions of the *Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America*.

In addition, BSA local councils are required to operate under locally adopted bylaws, pending approval by the BSA National Council.

Each local council renews its charter annually by submitting an application accompanied by required reports, audit of its accounts, and its goals for the ensuing year.

### Chartered Organizations

Each organization that charts one or more Scouting units must also apply each year for a charter from the BSA. The chartering of the organization establishes a relationship in which the council and the organization each agree to provide certain essentials. The council provides a professional staff, council office, training courses, camping facilities, volunteer helpers, literature, and program materials. The chartered organization agrees to provide a

chartered organization representative, adult leadership, meeting place, and other support.

This relationship is one in which the Boy Scouts of America permits the organization to use the Scouting program, but the organization “owns” the unit. **The full understanding and implementation of this arrangement by both parties is essential to the successful operation of Scouting units.**

### Nominations and Elections

The council nominating committee has one of the most important assignments in the council. This committee submits to the council a slate of council officers as well as executive board members and members-at-large for the ensuing year.

The personnel of the council nominating committee must be carefully selected. This committee should never become “ingrown,” and new members should be included each year.

These committee members should be objective and courageous in selecting those best qualified to fill council positions. They should also be able to personally approach and secure the acceptance of the desired candidates. This committee is kept busy all year to identify new prospects, fill vacancies, and recruit Scouters as needed.

Experience indicates that neither a rule nor a tradition that controls tenure in office is desirable. Such rules result in losing strong members who should be kept and

in keeping ineffective members who should be dropped. Instead, have a nominating committee with members of stature who will act with courage and conviction. New board members should be elected and inactive ones dropped each year. This ensures a vigorous organization that will not become ingrown.

Candidates should be considered on the basis of the success they have achieved in their business or chosen profession, and for their personal integrity. **They should never be selected as a reward for service in Scouting or what they know about Scouting, but should be invited to join the board solely on the basis of who they are and what they can do for Scouting.**

The executive board should adopt election procedures such as those found in the local council bylaws.

No organization can hope to rise to a higher position in a community than that occupied by its leaders. So it is in a local council; the reputation and stature of the executive board members will determine the esteem in which Scouting is held in the community. The image of Scouting is established in large measure by the devotion and exemplary service of its leaders.

## District Organization

A council organizes its service area into districts to bring services closer to units and chartered organizations. The authority for establishing districts lies with the executive board. Population growth or shifts, as well as membership, make it necessary for most councils to restudy their district boundaries from time to time in order to maintain maximum efficiency.

While the council is created for the purpose of organizing units and helping them succeed, these functions are carried out in large measure by districts. The council then becomes responsible for developing and maintaining successful districts. Therefore, the president and other board members should be alert to the need for maintaining effective districts. This is accomplished by rendering continuous assistance to the districts in all facets of operation.

## Youth Membership

Two primary tasks of a council are to organize units so that youth may be enrolled; and second, to maintain and serve those units so that youth derive maximum benefits from Scouting. In this light, membership becomes the most important criteria of a council's progress, and detailed attention must be paid to the organization of new units.

Sometimes, many new units are organized simultaneously in an effort known as a together campaign. In addition, each council should promote a year-round recruiting program especially emphasized in the fall roundup, designed to bring new members into all units. Many councils hold special Joining Nights for Scouting, at which time youth and their parents can meet unit leaders and enroll.

As the number of units in a council increases, the task of rechartering these units each year grows proportionately. This is a primary objective of the commissioner staff, which should focus on the importance of rechartering units on time with minimum loss of youth and adults.

## Local Council Annual Meeting

The bylaws of all councils specify that an annual meeting will be held. This is the occasion for rendering annual reports of the different phases of council operation and the election of council officers for the following year. Other business that may be transacted could include adoption of the council program, budget, resolutions, and amendments to bylaws or articles of incorporation. This affair may be capped by a dignified dinner meeting at an attractive location.

## Recognition Dinners

Many councils also conduct annual recognition or appreciation dinners devoted to honoring unit leaders, conferring Silver Beaver Awards, training awards, Distinguished Commissioner Service Awards, and other honors to deserving Scouters.

Some councils combine this meeting with the annual meeting. In this case, it is important to hold the annual business meeting prior to the larger meeting so that attendance at the business meeting can be restricted to council members.

## Eagle Recognition Dinner

Most councils schedule an Eagle recognition dinner in which prominent citizens are secured to sponsor an Eagle Scout as his or her guest. This event is sometimes preceded by the Eagle Scout having spent a portion of the day at his sponsor's place of business. This is usually the result of the Scout having expressed an interest in the sponsor's field as a possible choice for his lifework. This can be a rewarding experience for selected board members.

## Strategic Planning

The Boy Scouts of America advocates that every local council develop, adopt, and operate a strategic plan in which its major goals are projected at least five years in advance. The area director and other regional staff members assist the council in the steps required to formulate a strategic plan.

Council committees and subcommittees conduct studies in membership, organization and personnel, quality programs, property assets, Multicultural Markets, and finance. Completion and adoption of a strategic plan requires action by the executive board.

Objectives and goals should have a defined time to be completed, with benchmarks and someone assigned to each responsibility. Councils should review their strategic plan quarterly to ensure that goals are being met and to make any adjustments that may be required.

The strategic plan information can be accessed through MyBSA > Resources > Council Strategic Management. Through this process, the local council and volunteers can develop and maintain a strategic plan in an online tool. Aligned to the Journey to Excellence program, this system provides real-time reporting, facilitates communication through e-mail reminders, and drives accountability.

## Legal Counsel

It is most desirable that the council have access to an attorney who can advise it on matters requiring expert legal opinion. This person should be dedicated to the interests of the Scouting movement and be present during meetings of the executive committee and available for consultation by council officers. The position of legal counsel is not an established office within a council, although this individual could otherwise be an officer or member. The most important consideration is that the duty of legal counsel is to represent the best interests of the council.

## Employees' Salaries

The president should be familiar with the salary schedule of the council for all its employees and be involved with the annual salary adjustment of the Scout executive. Information is available from the national office on setting the Scout executive's salary. The Scout executive will usually recommend adjustments for all employees

except himself or herself, and it is here that the president must take the initiative. Salary guidelines are published by the Human Resources Group of the national office.

Salary adjustments require attention twice: first, when the budget is prepared, and second, at the time of year when the salary adjustments are awarded. This can be done on the anniversary of employment, at the beginning of a new fiscal or calendar year, or whenever a merit increase is justified.

The president recognizes the importance of maintaining an adequate salary and benefits schedule for all employees and takes the initiative to set up the annual council salary review meeting. It has a twofold purpose:

1. To determine salary and benefit schedules for the following year.
2. To anticipate budget needs for the third following year based on national recommendations with special attention paid to necessary adjustments in salaries.

In addition to the president, an ad hoc committee might include three selected executive board members.

## Measures of Effectiveness

The Journey to Excellence standards help determine the effectiveness of the council. Councils are responsible for supporting districts in their progress through the Journey to Excellence. Efforts by the council and districts should focus on helping units succeed and qualify, thus providing a quality program for their youth.

The *Council and District Plan Book*, No. 33032, supports the four functions and the quality concept. It provides an opportunity for each committee to write its annual plan in support of goal attainment.

The Journey to Excellence forms, No. 513-105 through No. 513-109, and No. 513-112, provide the council and districts with a profile of how each one is doing on quantity and quality items.



# Interpreting the Local Council's Finance Program

The future of the Boy Scouts of America depends on strong councils with adequate financial resources. Well-financed councils will have the ability to employ a full, well-trained staff; provide exceptional program facilities; conduct first-class programs; and attract top-quality program and administrative volunteers.

Particular attention will need to be paid to identify, cultivate, and solicit donors at all levels (operating, capital, and endowment) who are supportive of the mission and values of Scouting. The emphasis must be on individual donors rather than on corporate and community resources. Councils must build an endowment fund sufficient to stabilize council finances in the face of annual funding cycles.

Councils must develop a plan for strong, sustainable, responsible fiscal management procedures. It is essential that the council can head off donors' concerns with established spending and investment policies, administered by the best available team of volunteers, staff, and professional advisers.

## Sources of Local Council Income

The responsibilities of raising, managing, and investing finances is assigned to the council finance committee, under the supervision and general guidance of the council executive board, council president, and Scout executive.

Funds for annual council operations generally are obtained through these sources and sample descriptions.

1. Friends of Scouting (annual fund-raising campaign)
2. United Ways (allocations, donor designations)
3. Activities (camporees, Klondike derbies, Scout shows, Scoutoramas, summer camps, Cub Scout day camps)
4. Special events (golf tournaments, sporting clays, distinguished dinners)
5. Project selling (camp equipment, council office supplies, wishbook items)
6. Product sales (popcorn, candy, Christmas trees)
7. Investment income (from direct gifts, endowment, bequests)
8. Foundations (local, private, community, corporate, civic)
9. Other sources (council executive board-approved fund-raisers)

## United Way Funding for Local Councils Today

United Ways today have evolved in many ways to provide funding to local councils. Here are the most common methods of fund distribution.

1. **Traditional funding.** Some United Ways still maintain traditional funding patterns in local councils. These requests involve filling out an application. Funding is usually received by the local council for comprehensive youth programs.

Allocation requests of this type are general. The funding is specifically intended to subsidize all or part of an agency's administrative or operating program costs. Agencies are funded rather than specific programs. It provides the agency with the flexibility to use funds where most needed in its operations. Comprehensive Youth Development usually covers funding traditional Scouting programs such as Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing. Thus, the council receives one funding amount for the overall Scouting program.

2. **Program or priority funding.** Program funding is one method United Ways use to fund agencies that are meeting community needs identified by citizen involvement. It is funding that is restricted to a specific program—a response to an agency request to fund all or part of a given program or implementation of a United Way request to an agency to take responsibility for a specific program.

Allocation requests of this type are based upon agency programs that meet specific priority needs in the community, as identified by the local United Way. Non-traditional Scouting programs such as Scouting for Food, Scoutreach programs, and Scouting for the disabled could be examples of meeting community needs in the areas of poverty, crime prevention, and youth at risk.

3. **United Way foundation funding.** Some United Ways are eliminating the need for standard allocation requests by allowing different agencies and community groups to openly request funding, like in a foundation. The application form is similar to a foundation request for funding proposal. The request can either be denied or approved. There is no automatically set or guaranteed approval process for this method. Usually, this method requires that the proposal match the needs of the United Way through identified community priorities to be funded.
4. **Outcome measures funding.** This is one of the most current methods of requesting funding from local United Ways. It usually involves a survey process and evaluation period. Councils are asked to identify a set of outcomes to be measured. These outcomes are discussed, reviewed, and approved in collaboration with the United Way.

Allocation requests and funding of this type are based upon measurable program outcome objectives. An agency would develop a list of proposed goals and objectives addressing a specific community need that has been identified by the local United Way. This list is included with the agency's allocation request. At the end of the United Way year, these objectives would be evaluated and assessed, and agencies would receive future funding for the next year based upon results attained in each special priority needs area.

Allocation requests of this type are based upon the United Way's desire to measure the impact of direct service by an agency to specific populations and the overall population in target areas of the community.

An agency may be asked to justify and evaluate its reason for existence as an organization in providing a direct service to the community. The question of how Scouting positively impacts or makes a difference in the lives of youth may need to be addressed.

5. **Donor designations funding.** This is a very popular method of distribution. It involves corporate workplace campaigns, and sometimes combined federal campaigns. Donors are allowed to designate their United Way gifts through their employer. The money is filtered through the United Way, at times with an administrative fee taken out. Next, the local council receives the gift with an acknowledgement from the United Way for those particular donors.

In some instances, donor choice has reduced the total amount of money available for United Way allocations to member agencies. However, in some local councils dealing with issues from the U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of the BSA, donor designations have increased and surpassed allocation-funding losses from local United Ways.

For more detailed information on the United Way and methods of fund distribution, as well as all of the BSA's fund-raising resources, see the BSA Finance Impact website at [www.fid.org](http://www.fid.org).

## Who Pays for Scouting

The cost of Scouting is shared by five groups—the youth member, the member's unit, the chartered organization, your local council, and the national organization.

**Youth members** and their parents pay their share. The member buys the uniform, handbook, and personal equipment, and pays camp fees. Members also pay dues to help offset the expenses of operating the unit.



**Unit finances.** The unit pays for activities and the supplies and equipment needed to support the Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, or Venturing crew. These funds come from member dues and various money-earning projects that have been approved by the local council.

**Chartered organizations.** Scouting is unique because it enters into a relationship with chartered organizations. These chartered organizations are locally established groups from the community that share Scouting's interest in youth. They provide meeting places and volunteer leadership for our Scouts.

**Council finances.** Your local council pays its share through local financial resources provided by the United Way, foundations, trust funds, special events, special projects, and Friends of Scouting.

**National/regional finances.** The registration fee, *Boys' Life* subscription fees, and a small share of the price of the uniform and equipment (Supply Group), help support the national organization that makes Scouting available.



# Guidelines for Council Presidents

## Congratulations, Mr. President

The Scouters who elected you as president of your council paid you a great honor and at the same time handed you substantial responsibility. But greater than either of these is the opportunity they gave you for affecting the lives of thousands of youth. There are many who would tell you that of all the opportunities that can come to a person for the investment of talent in service and humanity, Scouting has the potential for paying the greatest dividends in the shortest period of time.

You are one of just under 300 council presidents in the Boy Scouts of America. With the others of this small group, you help direct the destiny of a great movement that helps mold the future generations of our nation.

## The Council President as a Leader

The president is the top leader of the council and the primary volunteer leader of an organization promoting and extending a program for boys and young men and women, over a large geographical territory. This top leadership responsibility is shared with the Scout executive and council commissioner.

As the principal lay leader, the president acts as chair of the executive board. The administrative and financial phases of council operation come closely under the president's and the board's supervision.

The president is an administrator with the ability to recruit strong people for council leadership positions. The president ought to love the council more than anyone else does. The president ought to be a good partner to the Scout executive.

## What Some Council Presidents Have Done

What do the people who chose you as their leader expect of you? Some clues can be found in the answers some councils gave in discussing outstanding presidents:

- "United the council into a smoothly working team."
- "Led the council to a level of growth and achievement that had heretofore been considered impossible."
- "Recruited a number of topflight committee leaders, many of whom had never been in Scouting, and built an executive board of such caliber that it lifted the organization all the way along the line."
- "Wisely recognized that the number one need is a more adequate financing of the council and made this a major project. The budget was doubled, and every other phase of the program doubled right along with it."
- "Sparked the development of a strategic plan that has already resulted in a new council office and great new camp development."

- “Firmly believed that the quality of the professional staff was a major key in the whole operation and upgraded the salary scale of all council employees; added enough professional staff members to meet the needs.”

## Getting Started

As with any new responsibility, there are things to learn and things to do first. Your indispensable guide will be the Scout executive, who is in the best position to know all aspects of the council and its operation as well as the people involved.

You might ask, “What should I do first?” A new president usually takes these steps first:

1. Get better acquainted with and consult with the Scout executive about your orientation. Establish a convenient time for brief but regular get-togethers with your Scout executive.
2. Study this booklet and ask the Scout executive’s advice on other essential materials to review.
3. Meet and get acquainted with the council commissioner and other council officers. Your first meeting might be over lunch or dinner. Discuss a few of the current goals and deadlines for the council.
4. Make filling key committee vacancies and replacing inactive committee chairs your highest priority. Work with the Scout executive to develop an action plan for this recruiting task.
5. Place priority Scouting dates in your calendar, including meetings of the council executive board (where you preside), and an occasional annual event such as the council annual meeting, council recognition dinner, and the National Annual Meeting.

If you don’t already have one, you may want to set up a Scouting file as part of your personal files. Your Scout executive will help you assemble the necessary materials. This might include copies of the following:

- Your *Local Council Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws*
- Map of the council showing the council territory and district alignment
- Council strategic plan
- Council annual plan
- Council budget
- Roster of the executive board with addresses and phone numbers
- Organization chart of the professional staff

- Employment practices and personnel procedures
- Executive board and executive committee meeting minutes
- Council and district plan book with latest council facts

You should know the traditions, customs, and policies that are important in your council and also be familiar with the council properties, trust funds, articles of incorporation and bylaws, and insurance program.

## Volunteer-Professional Relationship

One unique characteristic of the Boy Scouts of America is the happy and effective relationship that has developed and is maintained between professionals and volunteers. The ratio is significant; there is on average only one professional for every 400 volunteers. This is what characterizes the Scouting movement as being primarily volunteer.

The professional provides guidance while the volunteer provides leadership and renders service. With the president and the Scout executive, this relationship becomes extremely important. Each has separate and distinct responsibilities, and yet, to be effective, they must complement each other.

It is important that the president and the Scout executive develop a working relationship in which each is utterly frank with the other. The president should expect the Scout executive to share any reactions that might be helpful in doing a better job as council president. Likewise, the Scout executive will expect the president to offer suggestions on how to be a more effective Scout executive. This is a partnership and should not be considered an employer-employee arrangement. Above all else, these two must face up to the facts.

The Scout executive will protect the president’s time so the hours he or she gives will be of maximum effectiveness to the council. With the president’s consent, any request for the president’s appearance at meetings will be cleared through the Scout executive so minor matters will not burden his time.

The president should understand that the direction of the council staff must come from one source, the Scout executive. As the president sees things that he feels should be done by the staff, he may freely discuss them with the Scout executive. The president should occasionally meet with the staff and come to know them by name with their responsibilities.

There may be matters from time to time upon which the president and Scout executive do not agree. They should agree that such matters should never be taken to the board or discussed publicly until they have reached a basis of agreement and/or have consulted with their area director.

The president and Scout executive should agree to communicate at regular intervals to make plans together and keep each other informed of what the other is doing. They will establish agendas and expectations for the board and other key council meetings. They will also arrange to have immediate access to each other in times of emergency.

It is the commissioner that acts as a liaison between professional staff and volunteers at the unit, district, and council levels. The council commissioner, as part of the council key 3, works together with the council president and the Scout executive at the council level. It's important that the council commissioner develops and keeps positive working relationships with professionals in order to assist them in their duties. The relationship is mutually beneficial, in that they assist the council commissioner in fulfilling their goals, duties, and responsibilities—and their assistance is invaluable. The council commissioner also works directly with the council president.

## The Council President and the Public

By your position as head of the council you will find yourself, knowingly or unknowingly, involved in public relations. Your statements will often be taken as reflecting the official interpretation of Scouting, both locally and nationally, rather than as your personal opinion. For this reason, you should check with your Scout executive before making any public statement. Familiarize yourself with rules and regulations, local and national charter and bylaws, and other national policies, so that you can properly interpret Scouting and how it is to be operated.

## Emergency Public Relations

With our vigorous, active program involving millions of youth and adults, we must always be prepared to handle emergencies and have a procedure to handle media relations.

Working with your Scout executive, here are some helpful guidelines for handling communication of a crisis or emergency situation with the media and the general public:

- 1. Have a crisis communication plan.** The Scout executive has access to a template, available through the National Council (MyBSA under the "SE Only" tab), that can be used in the development of a crisis communication plan. Part of the plan should be to have all spokespersons media-trained before confronted with a crisis situation.
- 2. Once a crisis occurs:**

**Know who the spokespersons are:** In most cases, the Scout executive will be the spokesperson, but confer with the key leadership of the council to determine who the appropriate spokesperson will be.

**Contact the Edelman emergency communications team** and determine next steps.

## The Council Financial Program

The council financial program requires the president's continuous attention. The president must be close to the preparation of the budget and especially concerned with the provisions made for the salaries of council employees.

In councils that are affiliated with one or more United Ways, the president should be cognizant of the amount that will be requested from each United Way, the manner in which the presentation to the United Way will be made, and who will make it. In many cases, the president will be personally involved in the budget hearing.

In Friends of Scouting (FOS) campaigns, the president will work closely with finance committee personnel in setting up the fundraising organization. When approaching the executive board, he or she will encourage each member to participate substantially.

The president will be concerned with the financial management of the council as revealed in the monthly finance statements, and should be familiar with the internal controls that are used to keep expenditures within budgeted limits. The president will be alert to avoid incurring debts and accumulating deficits so that the council will be solvent at all times. He or she makes sure that the council uses its property assets efficiently and in such a way that these assets do not jeopardize the council's ability to provide basic field service.

Other important finance projects that will require the president's attention from time to time are endowment development, the approach that might be made for a foundation grant, or a special project that should be underwritten.

## **Participation of the Council President**

The following are considered to be sufficiently important to justify the president's personal attention. Occasionally, a special situation will develop that could necessitate the president's participation.

- The BSA National Annual Meeting
  - The council annual meeting
  - Annual recognition dinners
  - Executive board meetings
  - The annual council salary review meeting
  - United Way fund budget presentation
  - Eagle Scout recognition dinner
  - Area conferences
- The following are optional and could involve the occasional personal participation of the president. However, except in unusual circumstances, these should not supersede those listed above.
- District committee meetings
  - Council commissioner staff meetings
  - Council operating committee meetings
  - Council finance committee meetings
  - Council camporees
  - Executive staff meetings
  - Summer camp (at least one visit annually)



# Guidelines for Council Commissioners

## A Scouter Extraordinaire

As council commissioner, you are truly a Scouter extraordinaire—a model of exceptional Scouting service throughout the council. You lead a large corps of commissioners who will help all units become successful and provide an increasingly better Scouting program for the youth of your council territory. Because of you, your enthusiasm, and your administrative ability, thousands of youth will be touched by Scouting values.

## Getting Started

For new council commissioners, there are things to learn and things to do first. Your special guide will be the Scout executive and/or the professional designated by the Scout executive as adviser for commissioner service in the council. A new commissioner usually takes these steps first.

1. Get better acquainted with and consult with the Scout executive about your orientation. Establish a convenient time for brief but regular get-togethers with your Scout executive.
2. Study this booklet and ask the Scout executive's advice on other essential materials to review.
3. Meet and get acquainted with the president and other council officers. Discuss a few of the current goals and deadlines for the council.

4. Make filling key commissioner vacancies and replacing inactive persons your highest priority. Work with the Scout executive to develop an action plan for this recruiting task.
5. Serve as officer of the local council, a member of its executive board and executive committee, and as a National Council member representing the local council.
6. Keep the president and executive board informed of the council's units' conditions and successes, and any problems in delivering the Scouting program.

## Priorities for Council Commissioners

The council commissioner is responsible for each council unit to be visited by a unit commissioner and receive commissioner service every month. These visits are for the unit commissioner to assist the unit leaders in their goal of delivering the Scouting program. The unit commissioner acts as a counselor, adviser, mentor, service representative, and doctor.

1. **Vision.** Give all commissioners a vision of what it means to provide exceptional commissioner service to Scout units throughout the council.
2. **Quality district commissioners.** Work to upgrade the quality of people serving as district commissioners and uphold a high standard for their performance.

3. **A complete staff.** Ensure adequate recruiting in all districts to achieve and maintain a ratio of one unit commissioner for every three units and one ADC for every five unit commissioners.

Join with the Scout executive to hold district commissioners and district executives accountable.

4. **Continuing education.** Be sure districts provide not only opportunities for immediate commissioner orientation and frequent basic training, but also provide monthly learning experiences for all commissioners.

Upgrade the quality of your annual council commissioner conference. Be sure the conference includes the best in training sessions, fellowship, inspiration, and information on the latest in Scouting. Do everything possible to make it easy for everyone to attend, e.g., attractive setting and close to home.

5. **Preventing dropped units.** Be sure each district has a commitment and a strategy to provide prompt, intensive, and persistent care when major problems occur that could threaten the life of a unit.

Develop a no-lapse/no-drop commitment in the council and each of its districts.

## Key Resources

*Administration of Commissioner Service*, No. 34501. This valuable tool guides district and council commissioners and their assistants (and their staff advisers) in leading a successful unit service team. It addresses the responsibilities of commissioner leaders and the people they lead. It details commissioner recruiting, training, evaluation, meetings, and many other topics.

*Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service*, No. 33621. Consider this handy book the commissioner's best friend, the book every commissioner should own. It's packed with essential information on commissioner style, commissioner lifesaving, commissioner responsibilities, and dozens of other topics on providing unit service. It's the definitive reference on unit charter renewal.

*Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops, and Crews*, No. 33618. A practical how-to reference book chock-full of handy tips on helping units upgrade unit program. It suggests specific commissioner actions to help unit adults meet specific program standards and objectives. This book also includes unit commissioner worksheets and unit self-assessment forms for packs, troops, and crews.

*Council Commissioner Manual*, No. 522-015. An all-purpose, comprehensive guide for council commissioners in how to serve as a council key 3 member, support district operations, and provide quality unit service to help units succeed. Includes new UVTS 2.0 and Journey to Excellence information, as well.

## Key Calendar Items

The following meetings and events are key commitments for the council commissioner:

- The BSA National Annual Meeting
- The council annual meeting
- Annual recognition dinner
- Executive board meetings
- Council commissioner cabinet meetings
- Annual council commissioner conference
- Area conferences
- Occasional visit to a district commissioner staff meeting



# Ideas for Board Member Orientation

- Plan the event. The Scout executive takes the lead and plans the event.
- Conduct a group orientation session. Spend half a day with new members at a prestigious location; or take them to camp; or start at 4:00 P.M. and work through dinner.
- Include the council president, council commissioner, and other key officers.
- Involve an experienced board member who is articulate and a good instructor.
- Assign experienced board members as mentors to new members. Ask mentors to call new members before their first meeting, and have them greet and sit with new members at the meeting.
- Have a morning session at the council office for new board members. Provide individual coaching and establish a rapport with new members.
- Send new members a welcome letter and enclose orientation books. Write the member's name on the inside front cover.
- Make the orientation session more meaningful by being sure new members receive committee assignments and other specific tasks to perform.
- Prepare a folder, kit, or notebook for new members that contains key information about the council (budget, operating statement, council map, executive board roster, etc.).

## Use of the Council Executive Board Orientation Workshop

The council executive board is key to the overall success of the units within each council. The workshop will help create in all board members an understanding of and a commitment to the four functions of council operations: finance, membership, program, and unit service. The board's governance, active involvement, and focus on council finances are critical to your success. This workshop was designed to give both experienced and new board members comprehensive training on their role on the board and the methodology for achieving and maintaining Journey to Excellence status. This should be mandatory training for all board members.

**Overall time.** (Varies depending on the number of modules used at a time) The introductory video piece is 1 minute, 44 seconds long and will automatically show when the DVD is installed unless you place it on pause. Its purpose is to describe the modules and what they are about to experience.

**Facilitator.** This training is facilitated by the council president, council commissioner, and the Scout executive. You may also involve some experienced key council officers in specific areas or throughout the entire training process.



**Delivery mechanism.** This training combines DVD segments with interactive slides, discussion questions, and scenarios to communicate the key points and to hold your audience's interest. Encourage discussion and interaction. This imprints the information in a more meaningful and lasting way.

**Presentation procedures.** The syllabus contains step-by-step instructions for each section. Each of your board members should receive a binder or folder that includes all the various support tools and aids discussed in the training. Personalize it for your council.

You'll be directed to reference these resources by reviewing them after each module of the training. The resources will also make good reference tools during the year to help guide them in their responsibilities, especially as an officer or committee chairman.

## **Goals of the Council Executive Board Orientation**

- To understand the four functions of council operations: finance, membership, program, and unit service
- To enable all board members to understand their active role and importance in the organization
- To help them understand the need for additional board members
- To review their fiduciary responsibilities in that role
- To teach them the proven methods for projecting, acquiring, managing, and maintaining the financial needs of the council

Please completely review the syllabus, the DVD, and the CD with the handouts before you schedule and present the training. Your enthusiasm and familiarity with the material will help leave a lasting impression on your board.



**Prepared. For Life.™**



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, Texas 75015-2079  
<http://www.scouting.org>

SKU 33161

