



CONNECTION GUIDE

ADVANCEMENT

PURPOSE OF A CONNECTION GUIDE

To aid in facilitating conversations between commissioners and unit Scouters, fostering a deeper understanding of unit dynamics and operations, enabling commissioners to better serve and support the unit. This involves identifying and leveraging successes, supporting the unit as they identify areas of improvement, collaborating with the unit on their goals, and providing necessary resources in support of those goals.

WHY IS THIS UNIT METRIC IMPORTANT?

Advancement is an important method of Scouting, showcasing a Scout's growth and accomplishments. A unit with a strong advancement record is more likely to attract, recruit, and keep Scouts and their families engaged.

STEP 1: COMMISSIONERS REVIEW UNIT KEY METRICS

Objective Unit Data for Advancement

Is the unit currently meeting the key metric for advancement?

1. Packs/Troops – Did at least 30% of the youth advance at least one rank during the past 12 months?
2. Ships – Did at least 30% of the youth advance at least one rank during the past 12 months?
3. Crews/Ships – Does the unit have youth officers who are elected and trained?

STEP 2: UNIT CONVERSATIONS

Celebrate Success for Achievement or Improvement:

- Effective recognition is essential to effective unit service.
- Just say it. A straightforward, face-to-face "well done" is a simple but effective way to celebrate achievement.

Things to Consider:

- How is advancement recorded? Is it timely, accurate, and transparent?
- Does the annual program plan include appropriate opportunities for advancement and recognition?
- Are advancement opportunities properly planned and communicated to the unit's families?

Questions to Facilitate Conversation: (example questions to help the commissioner engage with unit leaders as each unit is unique and the conversation should be tailored to the unit):

- What system does the unit use to record advancement?
- Does one leader track the data, or are multiple leaders involved?
- What is the lag time between completion of requirements and their documentation?
- Are reports routinely distributed to youth-facing leaders and the unit committee?
- How often/quickly does the unit recognize advancement?
- Cub Scouts: Are completed adventures awarded with loops/pins at the same meeting?
- Scouts BSA: Are Courts of Honor convened throughout the program year or does the unit recognize advancement at the next meeting?
- How does the unit plan advancement?
- Cub Scouts: Do den meetings focus on adventures, and are they frequent enough to ensure advancement?

- Scouts BSA: Do youth plan advancement opportunities, whether at the PLC or patrol level, to ensure buy-in and engagement?
- How quickly do Scouts begin advancing?
- Bobcat Adventure in Cub Scouts or Tenderfoot in Scouts BSA?
- Is there a plan for Scouts who miss meetings to catch up with their peers?
- Has the unit participated in district or council-level events that provide advancement activities?

Resources to Provide:

- Tutorials for Scoutbook and Scoutbook Plus
[Scoutbook](#) and [Scoutbook Plus](#)
- Program-Specific Advancement Resources
 - Cub Scouting – [The Advancement Trail & Adventures](#)
 - Scouts BSA – [General Advancement Resources](#) & [Troop Leader Resources](#)
 - Venturing – [Awards and Advancement](#)
 - Sea Scouting – [Advancement Resources](#)
- [Venturing Crew Officer Orientation](#)
- [Exploring Guidebook](#)
- Contact Information
 - District & Council Advancement Chairs
 - Experienced unit leader with knowledge and experience of best practices

STEP 3: HELPING THE UNIT SET GOALS

The unit can decide its own goals, whether they want detailed, simple, or no goals at all. A commissioner should be available to support them throughout this process.

- Develop and distribute a program calendar with ample advancement opportunities.
- Establish best practices regarding timely documentation and reporting of advancement.
- Ensure that advancement is recognized promptly and appropriately.
- Engage Scouts who have missed advancement opportunities, especially newer Scouts.
- Improve the percentage of Scouts BSA members or Cub Scouts advancing one rank in one year.
- Unit Scouters ensure their youth are using appropriate tools to aid in planning advancement during meetings and outings.
- Review advancement goals with den leaders to ensure focused, frequent den meetings.
- Provide ample advancement opportunities by participating in day camp, family camp, or resident camp.
- Meet with Scouts that are not advancing to find out why and develop a plan to help them advance.
- Plan meetings and activities to include advancement.

STEP 4: COMMISSIONERS PROVIDING UNIT SUPPORT

- Follow up with the unit regularly to check in on the status of their goals and provide them with upcoming opportunities within the district, council, or nation to learn more about improving advancement.
- Connect unit Scouters with the district advancement chair or a volunteer who is well-versed in best practices.
- Meet with the District/Council Advancement Chair or District Executive (DE) to discuss unit advancement opportunities.