

COMMISSIONER SERVICE

Recruiting Commissioners

Commissioners support unit leaders and improve Scout retention. We need enough trained commissioners to support every unit in your district or council. Because volunteers change roles and new units form, recruiting is a year-round responsibility.

Start with Your Vision

Before you start recruiting, answer one key question:

What does success look like for your commissioner team?

Your vision should:

- Support the national vision for commissioner service
- Meet the specific needs of your district or council
- Help you identify how many commissioners you need — and what skills they should have

Think about the balance of roles you need: specialists and generalists, administrative commissioners, roundtable commissioners, and unit commissioners. Where is the greatest need?

Know What You Need

Start by identifying which types of commissioners you need:

- Unit commissioners — work directly with units
- Roundtable commissioners — train and support unit leaders
- Administrative commissioners — manage and coordinate the team

Some roles require specific skills. A commissioner who works with struggling units needs different strengths than one who serves strong units. A commissioner assigned to Sea Scout ships or Venturing Crews needs program-specific knowledge.

Count how many units you need to serve. Look at your current team and identify who is active. That tells you how many new commissioners to recruit — and where.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach

The makeup of your Unit Service team is defined by the work to be done. Build your team around your district's real needs.

Use the [Recruitment Plan Template](#) to document your needs and track your progress.

Find the Right People

Look for four qualities in every candidate:

1	Passion	Do they love this kind of work? People who enjoy what they do will stick with it.
2	Potential	Are they a good fit? Skills matter. Match their strengths to the job.
3	Priorities	Do they have time? Even passionate, talented people can't help if their schedule is full.
4	A Servant's Heart	This is the most important quality. Commissioners need to listen well, understand how others feel, and focus on helping people succeed. We can teach Scouting programs — we can't teach someone to care about serving others.

Have an honest conversation first

Before making your ask, talk with the candidate about their other commitments — both in Scouting and in their personal life. Be clear and realistic about the time and energy this role requires. Then let them decide. Volunteers know their own limits better than we do. Respect their ability to make the right choice for themselves and their families.

Where to Look

- Units — ask engaged unit commissioners to recommend leaders they know
- Charter partners — they want strong units and can suggest good candidates
- Scouting groups — NESA, Order of the Arrow, and alumni groups are full of committed Scouters
- Service professions — teachers, counselors, nurses, and first responders often have a natural servant's heart
- Friendstorming sessions — gather names and key information about each person
- Unit rosters — look for patterns like parents registered in alternate years or outgoing leaders

Make the Ask

Prepare Before You Ask

- Write down what success looks like for this role
- Know exactly how much time it takes

- Bring someone the candidate knows and respects to support your ask
- Plan for common objections
- Have next steps ready if they say yes

Frame the Ask Around Three Benefits

Influence	Fellowship	Achievement
Make a real difference in units and in the lives of youth.	Build friendships with other dedicated Scouters.	Accomplish goals that truly matter.

Meet with them in person when you can. Personal conversations are more effective than emails or phone calls. Consider when and where the person feels most comfortable — and what is going on in their life. Customize your ask and explain why you believe they would be great for this role.

After the Conversation

If they say yes

Send a follow-up email right away. Get them trained. Match them with a unit. Answer questions and connect them with a mentor. Think about how you would want to be welcomed as someone new to a role — build that kind of community.

If they say maybe

Invite them to shadow an experienced commissioner. Show them the work is manageable and makes a real difference.

If they say no

Thank them. Keep the relationship positive. Follow up later to understand why — with no pressure. Reflect on what you learned for future asks. A "no" is not "never" — it is "not right now."

Example message:

Hey [Name] — no worries at all on the role, and I completely respect your decision. I did want to follow up at some point to understand if there was anything specific that made it not the right fit. No pressure, and nothing will change — I just want to make sure we're setting things up well for the right people going forward. Thanks for everything you do.

Handling Common Objections

"I've never done anything like this before."

That's actually one of the best things you can bring. We're not looking for people who have all the answers — we're looking for people who are willing to show up and willing to learn. You'd have support, training, and a team behind you from day one.

"I don't have enough time."

That's the most common thing I hear — and I get it. Can I share what the actual time commitment looks like? It may be less than you're picturing. And if the timing isn't right now, I'd love to stay in touch for when things open up.

"I want to do other things / I have other priorities right now."

Totally fair. I wouldn't want you to take on something that doesn't align with where you want to put your energy. Is there a type of involvement that would feel more meaningful to you? I'd rather find the right fit than ask you to stretch into something that doesn't feel right.

"I'm not qualified for this."

The qualifications that matter most here aren't on a resume — they're things like showing up consistently, caring about the mission, and being willing to grow. We can build the rest around you. What specifically feels like a gap? There may be more support available than you realize.

"I'm already stretched too thin."

I hear you — and the last thing I want to do is add to that. I'm not going to push. But if something were to change, or if a lighter-touch way to stay involved ever made sense, I'd love to have that conversation. Thank you for being honest with me.

For more guidance, see the [Making the Ask template](#) and [sample](#) on [scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org).

Build a Recruiting Plan

A good recruiting plan:

- Starts with your vision of success
- Uses data — how many units to serve, how many commissioners you currently have
- Sets specific goals with deadlines
- Changes as needs change
- Is written down and shared with your whole team — everyone can help recruit
- Identifies someone who can independently help close the conversation and welcome new recruits

A plan only works if you work it.

Key Points to Remember

- Recruiting takes a whole team — it is not one person's job
- Match the right skills to the right role
- Look for servant-leaders — that is the most important quality
- Recruiting is continuous, not a one-time event
- Use tools like Commissioner Tools and the Unit Service Plan

Resources

[Friendstorming Guide](#)

[Commissioner Training — my.scouting.org](#)

[Commissioner Awards and Recognition](#)

[Team Structure Guide](#)

[Recruiting Plan Template](#)

[Recruiting Plan Sample](#)

[Making the Ask — Template](#)

[Making the Ask — Sample](#)