

COMMISSIONER SERVICE

Finding Your Next Commissioners:

The Roster Review Method

Why Review Rosters?

Finding good commissioners does not have to be a mystery. Some of your best candidates are already in your district — they just finished serving in a unit. This guide shows you how to find them through a simple roster review.

1 Know What You Need

Before you start looking, decide what types of commissioners your district needs most.

- Unit commissioners — to support packs, troops, crews, and ships
- Roundtable commissioners — to run monthly meetings
- Specialist commissioners — for specific programs or expertise
- Administrative commissioners — to help coordinate the team

Write down how many of each type you need. This keeps you focused during your search.

Consider special skills that would help:

- Language skills or cultural knowledge
- Geographic areas to be served
- Technology skills or unit-specific experience (for example, sailing skills for Sea Scouts)

Plan ahead

Use the Recruiting Plan Template on [scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org) to document your needs before you start.

Who Makes a Good Commissioner Candidate?

Look for Scouters who:

- Served in unit leadership roles — den leader, assistant Scoutmaster, committee chair, and similar positions
- Have seen the Scouting program work for their own youth
- Are committed to Scouting's values and mission
- Have a child who moved up to the next program or aged out

- Are not currently serving in another key unit role, or are in the middle of transitioning roles

2 Plan Your Review Meeting

Set up a focused work session with your commissioner team.

Who Should Attend

- District commissioner
- District executive
- Assistant district commissioners
- District chair and committee members
- Anyone who knows the units and community well

Plan for about three hours for a 50-unit district. Larger districts may need a second session.

Pre-work makes the meeting more productive

Ask participants to come with a list of prospects they would recommend — including people outside of Scouting. Encourage creative thinking.

3 Gather Your Materials and Tools

You will use a combination of printed rosters and online tools.

Online Tools to Have Ready

- my.scouting.org — access current and past rosters
- Scoutbook — see which families are still active
- Commissioner Tools — use reports to identify candidates
- Your council databases — alumni lists, Eagle Scout lists, and similar records (request in advance)

Helpful Reports from Your Council

Ask your district commissioner to request these reports from the council registrar:

- Adults who recently left registered leadership roles in units
- Adults who did not renew and dropped off rosters
- Families with youth in multiple units
- Units that recently transitioned their Key 3

Other Helpful Lists

Cast a wider net by also considering:

- Charter organization membership lists
- Local businesses
- PTA and parent organizations
- Local service organization membership lists
- Brainstormed lists from participants — ask each person to bring 5–10 names of community members not currently involved in Scouting

Set Up Your Meeting Space

- Large tables for spreading out materials
- WiFi access for online tools
- Laptops or tablets — ideally one per person
- Highlighters and notepads
- Snacks and drinks — this is a working session!

Organize your rosters by unit and year. Group units that feed into each other, such as packs paired with their linked troops.

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Start Your Review

Walk your team through the goal: you are looking for adults with strong leadership experience who have seen Scouting work for their own kids and might now have time to serve as commissioners.

Review Strategy

- Start with the oldest pack rosters — go back five years
- Look for parents who held leadership positions for multiple years
- Highlight their names
- Use Scoutbook or my.scouting.org to see if their child moved to a troop
- Check whether the parent is still registered — if not, they may be a strong candidate

Divide the units among your team members and get to work.

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Spot the Patterns

As you review rosters, watch for these situations:

Pattern	What It Means

Parents who took turns	Mom was den leader years 1 and 3; Dad was den leader years 2 and 4. Both have experience and shared the load — both could be great commissioners.
Split service	One parent is on the pack committee; the other helps with the troop. They have a second child. The pack parent may become available when the younger child crosses over.
Served and moved on	Parent was a Cubmaster or committee chair for several years. Their child is now in a troop, but the parent is not registered anywhere. This is your ideal candidate.
Repeat AOL leader	Someone was an Arrow of Light leader twice. They probably have two kids. When the second one crosses over, the parent may become available.
Too many ASMs	A troop has six assistant Scoutmasters. They probably do not all need to stay in that role — some may want a different way to serve.
Aged out	Parents were active while their Scout was in the program but dropped off when the Scout aged out or went to college. They may miss being involved.

6 Collect Prospect Information

For each prospect you identify, record the following (if known):

- Name and contact information — phone and email
- Units they served in and when
- Positions they held
- Names of two people who served alongside them (as references)
- Contact information for those references

Create a simple spreadsheet or shared document to track all this information.

7 Make Reference Calls

Before reaching out to prospects, call their references first. Ask about:

- Scouting knowledge and experience — did they know the program well?
- Passion for Scouting — were they enthusiastic and engaged?
- Potential — would they be effective in a commissioner role?
- Current commitments — are they serving in another role right now?
- Interests — what motivates them? What special talents do they bring?
- Who they respect — which Scouters do they trust and listen to?

Use these calls to narrow your list to the best-fit candidates.

8 Make the Ask

When you contact prospects:

- Have someone they know and respect make the call — you learned who that is from references
- Be clear about what commissioners do and the time commitment involved
- Share how they will be supported and trained
- Explain specifically why they would be great for this role — personalize the ask
- Listen carefully to their questions and concerns

Use the official resources

Commissioner job descriptions are available at scouting.org/commissioners/recruiting-and-retention/.

The Making the Ask template is a great tool to help you prepare.

9 Follow Through

If they say yes:

Start orientation and training right away. Connect them with an experienced commissioner who can mentor them.

If they say no:

Thank them and ask whether there is another role that might work better. Maybe they would prefer roundtable or could serve in a different way. Keep the door open. A "no" simply means "not right now" — it does not mean "never."

Using Technology Effectively

- Set up filters in my.scouting.org to view specific years and positions
- Use Scoutbook or my.scouting.org to see which families are still active across programs
- Export rosters if you want to sort and filter offline
- Share your prospect list via Google Docs or a similar platform so everyone can add notes
- Set calendar reminders for follow-up calls
- Check the Commissioner Tools website regularly — new reports are added over time

Final Tips for Success

- Do this review at least once a year — fall is a great time
- Look in the broader community too — we can train anyone who has the right heart and mindset
- Involve your whole commissioner team — many eyes spot more patterns and build shared ownership
- Be patient — not everyone will say yes right away
- Follow up with prospects even after a no — they might be ready later
- Celebrate wins — when someone says yes, recognize it with the team!
- Track what works so you can repeat the process next year



Remember

This process works because you are finding people who already have a servant's heart. Your district's next great commissioner is probably already out there — you just need to find them.