



Stabilizing Scouting Units

Why Stabilization Matters: It is important to start strong, but it is just the beginning. Helping a new unit, especially in its first few months or years, requires commitment, teamwork, and active support. Even well-prepared units might face challenges without continued help.

A new unit is the responsibility of the entire district.

District and Council Support: A unit's success depends on timely, steady, and reliable support from commissioners, district committee members, professional Scouters, and experienced Scouters in other units. The district commissioner should know when new units are formed.

Tailoring Unit Support: District commissioners usually take the lead in deciding how to support new units when they are formed. They:

- Figure out the best way to help each unit.
- Get other district committee members and experienced unit leaders to help the units.

Every unit is different, and there is no single solution for unit challenges.

Units changing leaders may need the same support as new units.

Each new unit should have a commissioner and/or other district volunteers assigned to provide active support.

The following are suggestions for ensuring effective support:

- This Scouter or team serves as the main resource for answering questions, providing support, and connecting the unit with district or council resources when needed.
- District commissioners choose the best model to support each unit and encourage other district committee members to engage with the units early and often. Support for new units should not rely on commissioners alone.
- A high level of support is needed until the unit is stable enough to operate independently. It often takes about three years, but it may be shorter or longer.
See **Progression to a Self-Sufficient Unit**.
- Keeping the same person or team in place during this time is ideal, but not required. Any changes in support should be carefully planned, with clear communication and strong involvement from the unit leaders.



The First and Best Resource: When supporting new units, consider:

- How can I/we help? *Ask them.*
- What to do if the unit leader and volunteers say they need or want to know? *Provide it or connect them to the right resource.*
- What knowledge or skills, such as Scouting fundamentals and running meetings, do the unit leader or other unit Scouters need? *Provide it or arrange for its provision, then follow up.*
- What council or district resources does the unit need? *Make sure they receive them.*
- What is the unit's plan for success, and how can the district support that plan? *Take action.*
- How can the EDGE method help new Scout leaders learn? *Use it and follow through.*
See [The Teaching EDGE](#); [Lesson plan for EDGE](#).

In addition:

- Provide consistent support and mentorship.
- Use the unit dashboard, unit metrics, and reports at my.scouting.org for insights.
- Reach out to other district, unit, and council Scouters to support and interact with the unit's leaders. Support for new units is not a one-person job.

Other District Committee Members

- Proactively reach out to new units to understand their needs. Then provide it.
- Stay connected through quick check-ins by phone, text, or email.
- Use roundtables for mentoring, learning, and connecting new Scouters with experienced ones who can share their knowledge. Consider using established units to mentor new units.

Training

- Leaders thrive with quality [training](#).
- When new Scouters and new Scout parents take training early, they can lead a strong program sooner. This makes Scouting fun for youth and adults, encouraging them to stay and strengthening the unit.
- New Scouters and parents want to understand what they have joined. Training – online or in person – helps them learn faster.
- Encourage position-specific training and the required Safeguarding Youth Training. Click [here](#) for position-specific training requirements. Scouters should keep their training up to date. Also see [Hazardous Weather Training FAQ](#).



Four Functions of a District

Some Key Elements:

The following are areas where new and struggling units often need help.



Recruitment – Recruiting new youth members:

[Recruitment Resources](#); [Dynamic Recruitment](#)

[Cub Scouts](#); [Pack and Den Recruiting](#)

[Scouts BSA](#)

[Venturing](#)

[Sea Scouts](#)

[Roundtable Hot Topic: Recruitment, Retention, and Membership](#)

Encourage units to be visible in the community. Activities that place Scouts in public settings support recruitment and strengthen retention. Scouts grow when they are active and seen in their communities. New youth are often the best recruiters.

 **Activities** – New units and struggling units might benefit from opportunities such as:

- Helping at school functions and activities. Being visible matters.
- Building relationships in the community through parades, clean-up days, holiday events, etc.
- Keeping the focus on *FUN* for Scouts, parents, and leaders.
- Meeting parents' desires to be involved in their Scouts' activities by helping them get involved in small ways. Clear communication supports engagement.
- Offering activities that build social interaction and fellowship among members.

These efforts help Scouts stay involved in Scouting and support parents' engagement. Bringing together leadership, programs, recruitment, and retention enables any unit to grow and sustain itself. With this support, units can sustain themselves for many years.

Program Support Resources:

To support new unit leaders, it is helpful to become familiar with the specific Scouting program. The best resources can be found by selecting each Scouting program at www.scouting.org or the Commissioner Resources [webpage](#).

The commissioner or support team is the best resource for stabilizing and sustaining the units they serve.