

Council/Assistant Council Commissioner Basic Training



Time allotted	3 hours for presentation
Teaching format	PowerPoint presentation, Instructor-led discussion

Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unit-level JTE Scorecards• Onboarding Progress Records for Unit Commissioners, Roundtable Commissioners, District Commissioners, and Council Commissioners
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council/Asst Council Commissioner Basic Training Course Plan• Council/Asst Council Commissioner Basic Training PowerPoint Presentation• Computer and projector• Whiteboard or flipchart
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Unit Roadmap – Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units, 2020</i>• <i>Guide to Safe Scouting</i>• National Commissioner website: https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/

Course Connections

Connections to other CCS courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District/Asst District Basic Training• Unit Commissioner Basic Training• Roundtable Commissioner Basic Training
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Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 5 minutes

Welcome to Council and Assistant Council Commissioner basic training. Congratulations on being chosen to serve in these very important positions and thank you for accepting the challenge of serving.

(Introduce instructors. If time allows have participant introductions also.)

This session will provide newly appointed council and assistant council commissioners with key information needed to begin a successful term of service.

For virtual training:

Raise your hand for questions or enter them into Chat – we will answer when we can. Please mute unless we have a question for group or discussion time.

Unit Service– 20 minutes

The Foundation of Commissioner Service

When Scouting began and as communities started forming troops, it became evident that leadership was needed to maintain standards, provide camping opportunities, recruit leaders, give training, establish local courts of honor, and stimulate local Scouting. This person was the commissioner.

The Scout Commissioner represented the local community committee or council. A great deal of importance was placed upon the selection of this person. They were expected to possess a considerable amount of outdoor experience and act as the local authority in all Scoutcraft matters.

While originally a volunteer, in some areas the community was able to raise enough funds for the Scout Commissioner to become a salaried position, which evolved into the Scout Executive position. So, from the beginning, commissioners and professionals have been linked.

Wreath of Service

BSA commissioners and professional staff members share the wreath of service in the design of their badges of office to signify their shared responsibility for providing unit service. They also share something else unique in Scouting: a commission. The issuance of a commission represents the formal empowerment by the BSA to perform the duties and undertake the responsibilities of a commissioner and your acceptance of that obligation.

Mission and Vision

Commissioners share the mission of the Boy Scouts of America which is: To prepare youth to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

The vision of unit service is to assist units in ensuring every member of the BSA has a great Scouting experience.

Commissioner Culture

Along with the mission statement of the Boy Scouts of America and the commissioner vision statement, commissioners are motivated by these three principles that are emblematic of the culture of service to units. These are:

- Be the heart
- Build relationships
- Change lives

These concepts should guide all our interactions with units and unit leaders.

Objectives of Commissioner Service

At the practical level, all commissioners share these objectives which are to:

- 1. Support unit growth and retention through the Journey to Excellence process**
JTE measures performance characteristics that unlock the door to a successful unit. We should analyze the unit's program and identify JTE areas where help is needed to move the unit to a higher level of success. A new and revised Annual Service Plan will help support this objective.
- 2. Make meaningful unit contacts that capture in commissioner tools their strengths and needs, and a unit service plan that enables continuing improvement.** Our core task remains to make significant contacts with units over the course of a year. *Commissioner Tools* enables commissioners to develop a customized Unit Service Plan to address identified needs.
- 3. Linking unit needs to district operating committee resources**
The concept of linkage is critical to our execution mission. The unit commissioner is a link to the subject matter experts and resources who reside at the district committee level. The Unit Service Plan is used to capture the specifics of the linkages that need to be established.
- 4. Supporting timely charter renewal**
Commissioners are responsible for unit retention. A quality program attracts youth and adults to Scouting and is a key factor in retaining them. To fulfill our aim of helping units better serve more youth through Scouting, we should support the district operating committee's efforts to build membership and meet our responsibility to increase unit retention. Effective and timely charter renewal is a key part of retaining units.

5. **Supporting unit leaders by** collecting and sharing information, facilitating program training, and providing networking opportunities. One of the methods commissioners provide these opportunities is through monthly roundtables.

Commissioner Goals and Methods

These goals and methods are universal to all commissioners but how each commissioner achieves these goals and employs the methods is determined by the type of commissioner they are. As council commissioner, be aware of the goals and methods so that you can coach your commissioner team in their use.

The goals of unit service are to enable an increased number of units and enable the retention of units. Implementation of unit service plans through collaborative detailed assessments and an increased number of unit contacts enables commissioners to meet these goals.

The methods we employ include the steps that are enumerated in the *Unit Roadmap – Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units 2020*, assisting the units we serve in recruiting and training new member coordinators, collaborating with the unit Key 3 to develop and implement a unit service plan. We also encourage the use of the Journey to Excellence methodology to guide continuous improvement and use the suite of My.Scouting tools to stay abreast of the status of the units we serve. We never have enough commissioners, so we continuously recruit more, and we assign the resources we have to units with the greatest need for support.

Roles of the Council Commissioner – 35 minutes

Commissioner types

Commissioners come in all shapes, sizes, and experiences and they can be organized in many ways but there are just three types of commissioners:

- Unit commissioners
- Roundtable commissioners
- Administrative commissioners

Those that are not unit commissioners or roundtable commissioners are administrative commissioners.

Roles of the Council Commissioner

It is important to understand how the roles and responsibilities of a council commissioner derive from the functions the council commissioner serves within the council. Some of these roles are common to all the council leadership, and some are unique to the Council Commissioner.

Leadership and Governance

There are two dimensions by which we might characterize the role of the council commissioner. One dimension is related to the governance of the council. The other dimension is related to the operational leadership required to provide effective unit service to the council. We will first explore those governance roles that are common to most of the council leadership including the council commissioner, and then we will explore those other responsibilities that are unique to the council commissioner.

Council Governance

Each BSA council is incorporated as a separate, legal entity—a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with an independent governing board—chartered by the BSA to provide the Scouting program in a particular geographical area. In essence, the Boy Scouts of America is a federation of all its councils. The council commissioner is an important member of this governing board or board of directors, which is more commonly known as the council's executive board.

The council executive board oversees the council's administrative practices through policymaking, fiscal authorization, and supervision of the executive function embodied in the scout executive and professional staff.

The council Key 3 consists of the council president, council commissioner, and scout executive, and they are the primary leaders of the council executive board. Other executive board leaders include the various council vice presidents and the council treasurer. Together with the council Key 3, they constitute the board's executive committee. In addition, the board has several members at large. The organization of some councils may vary slightly from this structure, but this is the most common across the BSA.

The council commissioner, perhaps because of his or her extensive experience in Scouting, may be asked to participate in selected ad hoc committees formed under or by the council executive board. Such requests or assignments are not a specific responsibility of the council commissioner, but they are a common feature of all governing boards when a need for policy development or implementation is identified.

Council Commissioner's Role in Council Governance

So, what is governance? Governance can be defined as the combination of processes established and executed by the board of directors (i.e., the executive board) that are consistent with the organization's structure and how it is managed and led toward achieving the organization's goals. The execution of some of these processes includes certain legal responsibilities.

The governance of the council is vested in the council executive board. As a member of the council's executive board, a council commissioner shares all the responsibilities of the board concerning council governance. This includes certain legally mandated duties that executive board members accept to act on behalf of the organization. These duties include the following critical three:

- The duty of care and due diligence – Be knowledgeable regarding council information and act with prudence and care.
- The duty of obedience – Ensure that the council is obedient to its core purpose as described in its articles of incorporation and the BSA mission and policies.
- The duty of loyalty – Discharge all duties unselfishly to the benefit only of the council and not to the council executive board members or to him or her personally.

Because you are an elected officer of the council, it is recommended as time allows that you view the Council Executive Board training that can be found in the BSA Learn Center to get a more complete understanding of your leadership responsibilities as they relate to the governance of the council. An additional resource, if not already provided to you by your Scout executive, is the BSA publication entitled *Orientation Guide for Council Officers and Executive Board Members*.

Role in Key 3

Previously we mentioned the central role of the council Key 3 in the leadership and governance of the council and the council executive board. As a reminder, the council Key 3 is composed of the council president, the council commissioner, and the Scout executive. Each member of the council Key 3 has different roles and responsibilities that they fulfill in leading the council. Roles specific to the council commissioner include the following: "Inspirational Leader, Chief Morale Officer, Representative of the Youth and Volunteers, Liaison between Volunteers and Professionals, and Upholder of BSA Standards."

This is not to say that these roles are of concern only to the council commissioner. The other members of the council Key 3 have a stake in seeing that these roles are executed as well. Ideally, the council president is an inspirational leader in addition to being well-versed in organizational leadership and governance resulting from experiences outside of Scouting. A council commissioner can learn a great deal from such an experienced leader, and an experienced council commissioner can help a council president better understand the concerns of active Scouts and Scouters. As a professional Scouter, the Scout executive is a great source of information regarding current BSA policies, and he or she will be very concerned that those policies and standards are closely followed. The interaction between the council commissioner and the Scout executive should be a two-way street exemplified by mutual respect and support

As a Member of the Council Key 3

To be successful as a member of the Key 3, the council commissioner should develop strong relationships with the president and Scout executive. The relationships should be personal and broader than Scouting. The better the relationship, the more in tune each member of the Key 3 will be with each other. More cohesiveness will lead to greater success.

Be well informed on the wide array of issues and programs of the council. The council commissioner cannot represent Scouts and Scouters well if the council commissioner is not knowledgeable.

Raising questions before issues arise is ideal, but success can be achieved if questions are raised in real-time. Trickier, but at least as important, is identifying what is not happening or not being addressed. Having the confidence to participate as an equal partner during Key 3 meetings is necessary for others to treat you as an equal.

Finally, develop a vision for unit service in the council. Lead from the vision and bring the vision into Key 3 decision-making.

The Council Commissioner and Governance – Summing Up

Summing up the council commissioner's role in governance, the council commissioner is expected to understand and execute his/her responsibilities concerning the board's primary leadership roles for the council. These include setting local council policies and strategies consistent with BSA policies. Be actively involved in making major decisions for the council, such as whether to buy, sell, or renovate council property. Oversee implementation of these decisions by the council professional staff under the leadership and direction of the Scout executive or by the council volunteers with the support of the council commissioner staff.

The Council Commissioner's Operational Role

The council commissioner leads all commissioner personnel in the council. Their duties are outlined in the bylaws of the local council. The council commissioner is selected by the council nominating committee and is elected at the annual meeting of the local council and serves as a member of the council Key 3.

The Council Commissioner's Operational Role involves 5 things:

- To **Envision** what effective unit service in the council will look like and what goals must be accomplished during the council commissioner's term of service to fulfill that vision.
- To **Represent** volunteers and Scouts to the council's board of directors and its executive committee and its professionals.

- To **Recruit** assistant council commissioners and support the recruitment of district commissioners and an adequate number of administrative, roundtable, and unit commissioners to provide effective unit service throughout the council.
- To **Enable** commissioners to be successful.
- To **Retain** units and commissioners.

Envisioning requires alignment. Council commissioners should review their vision with the other members of their Key 3 to ensure mutual support. Key 3's must support one another's goals to be successful and alignment is essential to that.

There are limits to the council commissioner's role in recruitment. It isn't the council commissioner's job to recruit all commissioners, but it is his or her responsibility to recruit assistant council commissioners, to analyze the need for administrative, roundtable, and unit commissioners throughout the council, and to hold those who are responsible for recruiting other members of the corps accountable for meeting those needs.

Enabling the success of commissioners includes ensuring timely, effective training is available to them. It also includes assessing the performance of cabinet members and, sometimes, reassigning or replacing them to ensure effective service.

Retaining commissioners includes ensuring recognition of their efforts. Retaining units includes ensuring that unit leaders are provided with ongoing training and communication through effective roundtables, and that unit commissioners are engaged with their units.

What a Council Commissioner is Not Responsible for:

Everything done in Scouting falls into one of several functions:

- ✓ Unit Service
- ✓ Program
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Membership

As a member of your council's Key 3, you will be involved in all of them, but your role and responsibilities rest primarily in only one: Unit Service. There will be many opportunities for you to **link** with Program, Finance, Membership, etc. For example, through the unit commissioners, the Unit Service function which you lead should be actively identifying and bringing to bear the resources that might be needed for a unit to grow in membership, or skills that would result in better unit financial planning and fund development, or training that would help unit leadership

provide better and more effective program opportunities for its members. These resources should reside in the various subcommittees of the district and/or council committee structure, and effective unit service requires knowledge of those resources and how to connect with them. As the council commissioner, you can encourage and facilitate access to resources at the council committee level and through the district commissioners. However, your focus must remain primarily on the Unit Service function.

Break – 5 Minutes

Building the Team – 30 minutes

The Council Commissioner's Cabinet

In a well-functioning council, you will be tasked with responsibilities that can only be performed by the council commissioner – such as serving as a member of the Council Key 3, serving on the executive committee and council executive board, as well as on ad hoc committees and projects. It can become difficult, if not impossible to fulfill all these responsibilities without a dedicated team to help you carry them out. If you are focused on unit service alone, you are probably not giving sufficient attention to your governance responsibilities.

How can you attend Key 3 meetings, executive board meetings, and executive committee meetings, keep a perspective on governance and unit service, and execute the unit service function successfully? How do you get all this work done?

You can't do it alone! You're going to need help. Identify, recruit and mobilize the council commissioner's cabinet, consisting of assistant council commissioners and district commissioners, to carry out the unit service responsibilities that can be delegated.

Fundamental Concepts: Building a Commissioner's Cabinet

The first fundamental concept is *that you cannot do it alone!* An effective council commissioner needs help, and that help comes from a staff of equally committed volunteers. Recruiting and deploying effective assistants is not a sign of weakness, but rather, a demonstration of leadership and vision. A council commissioner can be most effective when managing this team.

The second fundamental concept is that *the design of a council commissioner's cabinet flows from two places: (1) the council commissioner's roles and responsibilities and (2) the council commissioner's vision for their term of service.* Once you understand *what* you want and need

to accomplish, it becomes possible to develop a structure for a commissioner's cabinet that will assist you in developing and implementing plans to fulfill the council commissioners' responsibilities and vision.

The third fundamental concept says that ***form follows function***. In general, this means the size and makeup of your cabinet should be based on the functions you wish to emphasize during your term.

The fourth fundamental concept says that ***there is no pre-defined structure***. The structure of a council commissioner's cabinet is fluid *and* flexible. It responds to the needs of the council and the units that it serves. It is derived from the council commissioner's responsibilities and vision, and it can change over time.

The council commissioner's cabinet needs to ***work collectively, collaboratively, and independently***. They need to understand the council commissioner's vision for success, have the sufficient initiative to carry out the tasks and be able to work well with the other members of the team.

Assistant Council Commissioners

The people you select to fill the roles of assistant council commissioners, and all district commissioners in the council, make up the council commissioner's cabinet. We'll talk more about district commissioners later. You can appoint as many assistant council commissioners as you think you need to help you manage the unit service function. In some councils, there may be only one or two assistant council commissioners, and in others, there could be as many as seven or more. The number and role your assistant council commissioners serve should be driven by your vision for unit service success.

Assistant council commissioners should be appointed based on their willingness and ability to carry out their designated functions. These are not honorary appointments, and your assistant council commissioners should understand their roles and responsibilities and the need to carry out their functions. Assistant council commissioners do not need to have prior specific commissioner service; they just need to have a willingness and ability to serve in their designated role. Appointments are for one year. They may be renewed based on your determination that they should be reappointed because they have been effective.

Assistant council commissioners are those persons you will rely upon to help carry out unit service responsibilities. When done well, these individuals may become seen as the subject matter experts for their areas of responsibility within your council.

Assistant council commissioners need to be able to work in a team environment with you and the other assistant council commissioners but also be independent and self-starters able to act proactively. They need to understand the overall vision and work towards that common vision.

Ideally, you will cast a wide net to recruit assistant council commissioners that represent the council's membership. Whenever possible, build your team with a diverse group of capable, effective leaders from across the council's service area, with representation from all demographics – age, race, gender, geography, religion, and varied scouting roles. As the goal for unit service is to serve all units in all areas of the council, a diverse team will have a broader network and range of influence than a cabinet built from within a single district or single demographic.

Role of Assistant Council Commissioners

Since assistant council commissioners are a part of the council commissioner's cabinet, what, then, is an assistant council commissioner's role? Simply, it is to execute, recruit, enable and retain.

Assistant council commissioners need to develop and **execute** the detailed plans needed to fulfill your vision of unit service and to help you **recruit** an adequate number of cabinet members to fulfill your vision so that the council retains commissioners and units. **Enabling** the success of commissioners includes ensuring timely, effective training is available to them. It also includes assessing the performance of cabinet members and, sometimes, reassigning or replacing them to ensure effective service. **Retaining** commissioners include recognition of their efforts; **retaining** units includes ensuring that unit leaders are provided the training and information that they need to conduct a successful program.

Assistant Council Commissioner Functional Responsibilities

Councils are sometimes organized into service areas based on the number of districts there are in the council. You might appoint an assistant council commissioner to oversee each of those service areas. These assistants work closely with the district commissioners in the districts that make up the service area. These assistants help ease the span of control for you depending on the size of your council.

You may also wish to appoint assistant council commissioners to assist you in managing other responsibilities.

You can appoint an **Assistant Council Commissioner for Training** who can make sure that all commissioners in the council have completed their position-specific basic training, provide a short training element during your monthly commissioner cabinet meetings, oversee the

conduct of an annual college of commissioner science or annual commissioners conference to keep the commissioners up to speed regarding updates and changes to unit service.

Appoint an **Assistant Council Commissioner for Roundtable**. This person will be responsible to ensure that the roundtable activities in each district are contributing to unit service in each district.

An **Assistant Council Commissioner for Commissioner Tools** might also be a good position to fill. This person can provide help and assistance to all commissioners that might need help using the technology available to commissioners.

Another assistant that you might consider is an **Assistant Council Commissioner for Charter Renewal**. This person can be a big help during charter renewal time to help you ensure the timely renewal of unit charters and to keep track of any changes in the renewal process that might be issued by the National BSA.

One more assistant you should consider is an **Assistant Council Commissioner for Awards and Recognition**. This person will help you to recognize and reward commissioners appropriately for their service. In some councils, this assistant could cover Commissioner Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition.

You could also select an **Assistant Council Commissioner for Communications** to handle commissioner newsletters, social media, and other communications functions.

The number of assistant council commissioners is at your discretion based on what you think is needed to carry out your vision for unit service in the council.

District Commissioners

District commissioners are approved and appointed by the council executive board upon the recommendation of the district nominating committee and with the concurrence of the Scout executive and council commissioner. While not selected by the council commissioner, the district commissioner should be capable and willing to work effectively with the council commissioner. The greatest single measure of a council commissioner's success is having a dynamic and effective district commissioner in every district. It's up to you to inspire your district commissioners to believe that their priority job is to identify and recruit enough of the right people so that all Scouting Units in the district receive regular, helpful service. Even though you may have service area assistant council commissioners, the district commissioners need to hear your vision for unit service in the council so that they can support it.

Council Commissioner Interactions with District Commissioners

Meet people where they are, and then empower them to be their best. A visit from the council commissioner at district commissioner meetings, which include assistant district commissioners, roundtable commissioners and assistants, and unit commissioners, empowers and encourages every commissioner. One of the more powerful, subtle messages is: if the council commissioner cares enough about me, my district, and what I am doing to visit us, then I should care about visiting my units, or roundtable, or other duties, and tending to them. Nothing is more powerful than a personal visit.

Council Commissioner Interactions with District Commissioners

Just as we ask unit commissioners to have a quality contact with their units at least every other month, council commissioners should visit with the district commissioners on a similar schedule. A quality contact should include inquiring about their lives and sharing compassion or support, as well as inquiring about the district and units in the district and providing guidance or suggestions on how to manage issues.

If your council has assistant council commissioners for service areas responsible for a certain number of districts, each assistant council commissioner should contact the district commissioners in their service area monthly. The council commissioner should also make personal contact with the district commissioners, but it might not need to be as frequent.

Meetings of the Council Commissioner Cabinet – 15 minutes

Meetings

Not many people enjoy meetings, but as council commissioner, you will be involved in many of them. We will discuss meetings and events that are key commitments for you as council commissioner.

Many Meetings

You will be involved in the meetings of many groups in the council that are key commitments of your position as council commissioner.

The council Key 3 meets informally as necessary to ensure proper coordination of the work of the council. They furnish liaisons between the commissioner staff and the various committees of the council. They may also provide proposals and recommendations to the executive board or executive committee of the board.

Executive boards generally meet four to six times per year on a fixed date with one of the summer meetings usually being held at a council camp. 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. 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.

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

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.

Council Commissioner Cabinet Meetings

The agendas for executive board meetings, executive committee meetings, and the council annual meeting are set by the council president and/or the Scout executive. Council Key 3 meetings are usually organized by the Scout executive, but all members of the council Key 3 are usually expected to collaborate in identifying topics for council Key 3 meetings. (You should feel free to provide input ahead of time to the agendas of all these meetings.) The agenda for the commissioner's cabinet meeting is set by the council commissioner.

The **council commissioner's cabinet meeting** should be held monthly or bi-monthly, and it includes all the council's district commissioners and all the assistant council commissioners that have been appointed. This meeting should focus on the needs of the districts as they relate to their contributions to the fulfillment of the council's strategic plan. There should be a short training element, something that district commissioners can take back and use to help them improve unit service. District commissioners should bring any requests for assistance from the council's operating committees that may not be available in their own district.

As the council commissioner, use this meeting as a key opportunity to gather information about Scouting across the council to inform and advise you in your other interactions as a member of the council Key 3 and council executive board and executive committee. The meeting should also be an opportunity for you to inspire and energize district commissioners as they go about providing great unit service in their districts.

Sample Cabinet Meeting Agenda

The major purpose of this meeting is to motivate and support district commissioners and to maintain a high level of unit service in the districts. The council commissioner presides.

Cabinet meeting agendas might include:

- A timely training topic.
- A district-by-district review of such items as commissioner recruiting, unit rechartering, and unit visits. This is a time to hold districts accountable.
- Discussion of future council activities such as the Friends of Scouting campaign, summer camp promotions, and other special projects.
- Opportunity for district commissioners to report briefly on the health of their units, a specific statement on unit coverage, unit service plans, and major needs of the district.
- Roundtable activities and attendance, commissioner training programs, and other commissioner-related business.
- A review of potential dropped units needing high-priority commissioner assistance.

Be sure to include those topics that support your vision of unit service for the council.

As council commissioner, you will want to develop and encourage meaningful discussion and collaboration among your district commissioners and assistants. A way to save time in the cabinet meeting for important discussion and development of plans and future actions in support of improved unit service is to provide written summaries of reporting-related matters, such as future council activities, before the meeting, and to encourage the district commissioners to do the same with their factual reports. Above all, your intent should be to encourage district commissioners and your staff to work together to tackle the important council unit service challenges in your council and districts, and to inspire them to do the best job they and their unit commissioners can do to provide excellent service to the council's units.

Break – 5 Minutes

Monitoring Unit Service –35 minutes

Monitoring

Monitoring means to watch, keep track of, or check on, usually for a specific purpose. So, what does a council commissioner watch or keep track of, and for what purpose? Council commissioners track the unit service that is provided by the commissioners in the council so that we can grow and retain units and ensure that every member of the BSA has a great Scouting experience.

Commissioner Tools

Commissioner Tools is a web-based set of tools in My.Scouting designed to help commissioners fulfill their mission by ***enabling easy access to actionable information***. Commissioners, in real-time, can view information about a unit's membership, the status of its leaders' youth protection and position-specific training, their participation in district roundtables, and the unit's current needs and opportunities to improve performance.

Commissioner Tools also ***enables improved focus on the primary objectives of commissioners***. Commissioners will be able to work together with a unit's Key 3 to develop a Unit Service Plan, which will be discussed more in a moment. Completion of the tasks identified in the unit service plan will enable continuous improvement in Planning and Budget, Membership, Program, and Volunteer Leadership. Through ongoing unit contacts, commissioners will identify unit needs and capture periodic updates of the collaborative assessment of unit health and ensure the plan for improvement is moving forward.

Supporting roundtable administration and promotion is another aspect of unit service that is benefited from Commissioner Tools. Roundtable commissioners can publish dates of upcoming roundtables, post agendas, record unit participation information, and note key developments that enable unit commissioners to effectively promote unit participation in roundtables.

Commissioner Tools ***supports the administration of unit service*** giving administrative commissioners the ability to assign unit commissioners to specific units, identify commissioner training needs, and identify units that need a commissioner assigned.

They will also be able to identify newly formed units so they can be assigned a dedicated new-unit commissioner. Reports are available online and can be downloaded in MS Excel format.

All the benefits of Commissioner Tools are available to all district and council-commissioned professionals. They, too, are encouraged to become familiar with it and use it to support volunteers more effectively.

To learn the mechanics of Commissioner Tools, review the Commissioner Tools training videos that are available in the BSA Learn Center and discuss them with your council's commissioner tools champion.

What does a Council Commissioner need to know?

Managing unit service in the council is the main responsibility of the council commissioner, and he or she is aided in this task by various assistant council commissioners as we have discussed. But there are things a council commissioner needs to know about the units in the council and the commissioners in the council.

Council Commissioner needs to know...

These are questions that a council commissioner should be able to answer or be able to quickly find the answer. Your cabinet keeps you informed about all these areas during your regularly scheduled cabinet meetings. You also have direct access to this information through the applications in My.Scouting.org and especially in Commissioner Tools. Review the Commissioner Tools videos to see how you can access this information.

Key Reports

These are key reports that you can use regularly to monitor unit service in your council:

Unit Contact Analysis contains multiple reports that cover various aspects of unit & commissioner management:

- "Unit Contact Analysis" tab - provides information on the number of units per district, the number & percent which have been contacted at least once this year, the number & percent contacted in the last month, the number of new units, and the number & percent of those which have been contacted once this month, the overall number of simple and detailed assessments in the district.
- "Commissioner Tools District Summary Report" tab – provides a local version of the monthly report published by the Strategic Performance office.
- "Monthly Contact Analysis" tab – provides an analysis of the number of unit contacts recorded by month for the current year. This information is provided by council, district, and sub-district.
- "Monthly Contact Analysis Chart" tab – provides the same information as above, but in a bar chart format. This report can also be filtered to show a singular council, a district, a group of districts, and sub-districts.
- "New Units" tab – provides a listing, by council, district, and sub-district of the units defined as a "new unit" in Commissioner Tools (36 months), including a count of the number of new units in each district. Additional filters allow this to be used to show "All" units and to filter new units by the year they became a new unit.

Units Needing Assistance Report is a tool that highlights units in the district that have a unit health score of 2.5 or lower. These units need help now. In a district that might have limited commissioner resources, you can use the information in this report to assign commissioners to the units with the greatest need for assistance.

The “**Trained Commissioners Analysis**” tool will take the Trained Leaders report from the Training Manager and provide summary information on the number & percentages of trained and untrained Commissioners by Council & District.

An assistant council commissioner can generate this information for you monthly so that you can keep district commissioners accountable for unit service in their districts.

Unit Service Plans and the Council Commissioner

The Unit Service Plan ensures that commissioners will have an impact. It enables commissioners to help units better serve more youth through Scouting. In the process, it enables improved retention of units and improves the performance rating of units using *Journey to Excellence* metrics.

Developing and executing a *Unit Service Plan* in Commissioner Tools touches *every* metric we use to help improve unit service and, every metric we use to help units continually improve.

Based on a **collaborative** assessment of unit health, unit commissioners develop a service plan that is **customized** to respond to a unit’s strengths and needs and draws upon resources available within the unit, its charter partner, the district operating committee, and the council if needed.

Through ongoing unit contacts, unit commissioners capture periodic updates of the collaborative assessment of unit health and ensure the plan for improvement is moving forward. The key is this: ***a significant contact ends in an actionable conclusion that furthers the unit service plan.***

Engagement of the unit Key 3 is essential to the development and execution of an effective Unit Service Plan. It has been shown that *all* units employing the unit Key 3 concept are stronger and have an easier time making decisions.

The Unit Service Plan provides transparency: working together, unit leadership, commissioners, and district and council operations volunteers identify how to deliver the best possible program to the youth served by a unit and work together to accomplish the plan they develop.

Council commissioners should monitor the service plans that have been generated in the council and hold district commissioners accountable to ensure they get completed. Problems in executing unit service plans should be a topic of discussion during your cabinet meetings, especially if there is a need to escalate council support.

Why Do a Unit Service Plan?

The simple answer to the question remains: a *Unit Service Plan* enables commissioners to fulfill their mission to help units better serve more youth through Scouting. And in the process, it enables improved retention of units and improves the performance rating of units using *Journey to Excellence* metrics.

Unit Service Plans truly are a better way to provide unit service! The council commissioner should hold district commissioners accountable for the execution of these plans.

District and Council Commitment

Finalizing and implementing a *Unit Service Plan* requires commitment from district operating committees and sometimes from council-level resources. While the method of gaining commitment may vary from one district to another or one council to another, the goal is to identify resources available from the operating committees that can help meet unit needs and complete action items on the *Unit Service Plan* (for example, the district's training committee might supply training needed by unit leaders while its membership committee might coordinate unit participation in the Fall Membership Roundup).

Unit commissioners will find the members of an effective district operating committee willing to offer resources to meet unit needs as they understand that no one, including a unit commissioner, can be an expert on everything.

District commitment enables the unit commissioner to link district operating committee resources to unit needs and identifies accountability for the related action items on the *Unit Service Plan*. With those commitments, the *Unit Service Plan* can be finalized.

The unit commissioner and the unit Key 3 should monitor the plan throughout the year and identify when adjustments are needed. Unit contacts recorded in *Commissioner Tools* will provide valuable information for the next unit assessment.

What Success Looks Like

Using the actionable information in Commissioner Tools, council commissioners can see

Early Indicators of Success, including:

- An improvement in the percentage of units with assigned commissioners
- An increase in the percentage of commissioners entering unit contacts
- A higher percentage of units with Simple Assessments
- A higher percentage of units with Detailed Assessments

and

Ultimate Indicators, including:

- Higher retention rate of units and youth members
- Improved performance ratings of units using Journey to Excellence metrics
- A higher percentage of unit leaders with current Youth Protection Training
- A higher percentage of unit leaders with current Position-Specific Training

Support On-time Charter Renewal

Council commissioners focus on unit retention. By monitoring unit service throughout the council, completing the charter renewal process should be routine and units should be able to renew their charters on time. The details of charter renewal are delegated to the district commissioners, and the council commissioner can appoint an assistant council commissioner to monitor progress.

Break – 5 Minutes

Developing and Recognizing Commissioners – 15 minutes

Commissioner Training and Resources

Learning is a lifetime activity. As commissioners, we must continually adjust our skills to provide quality service to our units. Therefore, commissioners should view learning as an important part of their Scouting lives—every month, every year – and it is the responsibility of the council commissioner to see that a complete program is in place to train every commissioner in the council.

Continuous learning and training are important but so also is recognizing commissioners for their efforts. Review the commissioner recognition sections of the national website and encourage the recognition of all commissioners.

As mentioned earlier, only commissioners and professionals are eligible to be commissioned. Conduct an annual commissioning ceremony for your commissioners.

Additional Training

Make every effort to include a short training topic in your monthly commissioner cabinet meeting. This training topic can be presented by you as council commissioner, another member of the cabinet, or another Scout or Scouter.

The BSA Learn Center also has a good bit of online training that can help commissioners in their continued learning. Take advantage of these training opportunities whenever you can and be sure to make your commissioner staff aware of these opportunities as well.

As council commissioner, you should plan to conduct an annual training event for all commissioners in the council. This can be in the form of a Commissioner Conference or College of Commissioner Science. These events are great opportunities to directly influence the quality of training for commissioners. An annual Commissioner Conference is a high-morale event with a wide variety of training topics related to unit service. It is also a time to learn about the latest Scouting developments and plans for the year ahead in your council.

A College of Commissioner Science is the highest form of commissioner education available at the local level. A college is modeled after traditional college courses and degrees. A commissioner can earn a Bachelor of Commissioner Science degree, a Masters of Commissioner Science, and a Doctorate of Commissioner Science by attending the college and satisfying the prerequisites and requirements. They may also take courses as part of a continuing education program. The purpose of the College of Commissioner Science is to provide ongoing practical training for all commissioners to allow them to better serve their units

Commissioners are first and foremost leaders. If you have not already done so, please take advantage of the highest level of leadership training that the BSA provides to its leaders, Wood Badge.

National-level impact sessions are held in various parts of the country several times a year and virtual impact sessions are monthly 2-hour live online training events. They provide a focused session on a relevant topic for commissioners.

Additional training at the national level is available at the Philmont Training Center. During commissioner's week, the conferences feature the latest tools and techniques, discussions, and idea sharing led by a faculty of experienced commissioners.

Remember that training is continuous, and you can always get help when you need it. Check the Commissioner Development page of the national website for details.

Commissioner Website

This is the commissioner page on the BSA website. You can scroll down the left-hand column and view all the topics that are there to help perform your duties as a commissioner. Some of the topics include Recruitment and Retention, Awards and Recognition, The Commissioner Newsletter, the Unit Service Plan, and Commissioner Tools, just to name a few.

Commissioners are encouraged to visit this site frequently and check out all the information that is available on this site.

Commissioner Manuals and Resources

Commissioner manuals consist of a series of PDF documents, outlined on this page. Each manual module has several subtopics within the document. There is no provision for printing the information in book form. This format provides commissioners the opportunity to create their own hard copy book, or an eBook for tablet, phone, or other digital devices.

These resources are all available through the mobile apps as well. The modules are periodically updated as information changes. Check them regularly.

Other Resources

The process of building sustainable units requires purposeful thought, study, and investment of time and people for success.

One of the primary tools we use as commissioners is the *Unit Roadmap – Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units 2020* which addresses the 3 phases of long-term unit success.

The *Unit Roadmap* is only available in electronic format, either pdf or e-pub. The most current edition is always available at www.scouting.org/commissioners/manuals.

The *Guide to Safe Scouting* is available for download from the national website. This is a resource that also should be in a commissioner's resource library. Be familiar with its contents so that you can better guide and advise your units.

An additional resource, usually provided by your Scout executive to all new Executive Board Members, is the BSA publication entitled *Orientation Guide for Council Officers and Executive Board Members*.

National Council Support – 15 minutes

Council Support

As council commissioner, you need to be aware of where you can turn when you need assistance, to the National Service Territory Commissioner and the National Commissioner Service Team.

National Service Territory

There is one intermediate organization between local councils and the National Council, and it is called the National Service Territory (NST). There are sixteen National Service Territories in the Boy Scouts of America. Each NST has approximately the same number of councils.

The responsibility of the NST is to support Scouting in local councils across the nation. The BSA's split into territories helps councils share services and leadership.

Each territory is led by a team of volunteers and professionals. Their key responsibility is to provide support for local councils and to facilitate council-to-council collaboration to address identified needs within and among councils in the territory.

The functions of the NST generally align with local council functions and with the committee structure of the BSA's national committees. Each NST is intended to provide support for local councils in a variety of functional areas.

National Service Territory Commissioner

The National Service Territory (NST) commissioner will interact with councils and council commissioners in several ways. He or she will be someone who can help motivate and inspire unit service efforts in the local council. As a council commissioner, you will meet regularly with the NST commissioner, usually monthly, to discuss issues that affect councils in the territory. Through this interaction, you will come to know the council commissioners in the other councils in your National Service Territory. Among these folks will be some who can provide ideas or share experiences that can help you resolve issues in your own council or brainstorm potential approaches to achieve components of your vision for unit service in your council.

Also, do not hesitate to contact your NST commissioner if you have questions or concerns regarding how to inspire effective unit service in your council. The NST commissioner will monitor councils using Commissioner Tools and be a resource for you to discuss issues unique to your council so that you receive help from the territory if needed. Remember, the NST commissioner has the same 5 objectives that you do. Use your NST commissioner as a resource, counselor, coach, and support.

The NST commissioner is also a link between your council and the National Commissioner Service Team. Expect regular communication from the NST commissioner to keep you informed of new information regarding unit service that comes from the National Commissioner Service Team.

National Commissioner Service Team

To expand direct support and communication more effectively to the field and local councils, a national volunteer organizational structure was developed for commissioner service known as the National Commissioner Service Team. The goal of this team is to positively impact the quality of unit service across the country.

The National Commissioner Service Team provides an operations component to the commissioner corps. These key national volunteers are responsible for the areas listed. Among them are two NST Commissioner Facilitators who provide support to the National Service Territory Commissioners. The National Commissioner Support Team members and responsibilities change over time, so reference the Commissioner pages on the national website to review the most up-to-date information.

National Commissioner Service Team (continued)

The National Commissioner Service Team Chair has added representatives for the following Scouting program phases to the National Commissioner Service Team to further facilitate unit service communication across the organization.

Summation & Next Steps – 5 minutes

Next Step – Council Commissioner On-Boarding

You have completed the instructional portion of Council Commissioner Basic Training. It is now time to begin the application phase. Over the next 30 days, review the Council Commissioner On-Boarding Progress Record with your coach.

Your council Scout executive or better yet National Service Territory Commissioner can serve as your onboarding coach. He or she can guide you through the onboarding process. Once you have completed the steps outlined in the onboarding progress record, your coach will enter your training online in Training Manager, and you will receive your trained patch and commission as a council commissioner.

Summary

Close with the following statement –

As a council commissioner, you have made a personal commitment to Scouting and your council. It's a commitment of time, effort, and knowledge. It's a commitment of patience and understanding. It's a commitment to be a living example for the commissioners in your council and to lend a helping hand to fellow commissioners.