

Unit Commissioner Position-Specific Training



Time allotted	180 minutes
Teaching format	Instructor-led discussion with PowerPoint

Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unit Metrics Chart – 1 per person• Trained cards verifying attendance• Unit Commissioner Onboarding Orientation Guide 2025
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unit Commissioner Position-Specific Training Course plan• Unit Commissioner Position-Specific Training PowerPoint presentation• Computer and projector• Whiteboard or flipchart
Resources for additional participant learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Commissioner Website (https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/)

Note to instructors: Upon completing the classroom portion, please provide each participant with a **training card** so that onboarding coaches can verify their attendance.

Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 5 minutes (slides 1-7)

Welcome to Unit Commissioner Position-Specific Training!

As commissioners, we strive to help units serve more youth through better Scouting by providing an adequate number of trained commissioners who serve as a link to district operating committees, supporting a quality unit program.

We appreciate your service in this role of building and maintaining healthy units!

During this session, you should develop an

- **Understand** the concept of unit service
- **Recognize** the role of the unit commissioner
- **Identify** the interrelationships and functions of the district/council

As commissioners, we share Scouting America's Mission, Vision, and Goal.

Mission: To prepare youth to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Vision: Prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader, guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

Goal: Prepare America's youth for lives of impact and purpose.

Our Objectives

- **Membership retention**
- **Membership growth**

While many commissioners may not be **directly** involved in recruiting and retaining youth and adult members, all commissioners **contribute to membership growth by working closely with units to ensure their** success. Growing Scouting requires commissioners to partner with volunteers throughout Scouting America, and if we do that well, Scouting's growth will be significant **and** sustainable.

Commissioner Culture

- **Be the Heart:** Scouting's units are its heart; its success depends on them; they deliver its programs to youth. Commissioners support unit leaders in developing a safe, welcoming environment and delivering Scouting's programs effectively. We exist to support Scouting's heart.
- **Build Relationships:** Commissioners must develop relationships with unit leaders we serve based on mutual respect, candor, and trust. Without that, the communication and collaboration required to support units effectively are impossible.
- **Change Lives:** Scouting changes lives – of the youth it serves and the adults who support it (both volunteers **and** professionals). As they adopt Scouting's values, they become engaged citizens who strengthen our communities, nation, and world.

Our Purpose

Being the Single Best Resource

Unit leaders need to know that they have someone to go to who can either give them an answer or find an answer. While commissioners won't have the answer to every question, they should be the single best resource for unit leaders who need answers or support.

Our Methods

- Objective Metrics
- Unit Connections
- The Key 3
- Impact, Not Activity
- Grow Partnerships
- Change the Way We Work Together

Commissioners review objective metrics and have meaningful conversations with unit leaders, listening carefully to the needs and concerns of unit leaders. Commissioners are not there to grade or score or tell unit leaders what to do. Instead, they collaborate with the unit Key 3 to ensure the unit's success. Because we often lack a sufficient number of commissioners, commissioners should partner with units that have the greatest need for support. Helping unit leaders achieve their vision will grow meaningful partnerships between commissioners and unit leaders.

It is an honor to serve as a commissioner.

Concept of Unit Service – 20 minutes (slides 8-15)

There are three components used in Unit Service.

The first is **Unit Metrics**. Unit Metrics introduce objective data about units. They can serve as a starting point for conversations and may suggest areas for discussion to help understand how the unit operates and how commissioners can engage to support it. They are **NOT** measures of success or failure.

The second is **Unit Connections**, a method and tool that will help commissioners develop partnerships with unit volunteers and guide conversations toward areas where we can have a positive impact on units.

The third component is **Commissioner Tools**, which involves integrating Unit Connections and key metrics into our Commissioner Tools information system. We will dive into Commissioner Tools in My.Scouting later.

Unit Conversations

Conversations are the focal point of our operations. While we may not have the opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions at every interaction, commissioners should be prepared to discuss objective unit information, such as activities, membership, and training.

We need to build relationships through focused conversations to understand unit dynamics and operations better, enabling commissioners to serve and support the unit more effectively by meeting their needs and offering assistance.

Unit Metrics

The first thing a unit commissioner must do is get to know the unit and its people. This may take several visits. Unit metrics are an objective starting point for discussions after a relationship is established.

These provide insight into a unit's overall status, enabling you and the unit's Scouters to collaborate and improve the unit's ability to deliver the promise of Scouting. They are **not** intended to compare one unit to another or to provide a "score".

The unit metrics chosen provide an objective and valuable means of identifying how a unit is performing, enabling commissioners a convenient method to provide focused help where it is needed.

This information is available on the unit's dashboard. We will talk about access to that shortly.

Unit Metrics

Handout: Unit Metrics Chart

These objective metrics are determined using thresholds established for average expectations. Variation from these thresholds is not necessarily 'good' or 'bad.' **Metrics are not scores.** They identify opportunities to provide helpful guidance where needed. Discussing only one or two metrics with a unit leader to explore where help might be required, could be very beneficial.

However, discussing those where they're going well is also essential. Everyone needs to know that you also notice the positive things.

This chart displays five metrics, covering each of the five Scouting America programs, and describes thresholds based on average expectations. Each metric and threshold was established based on a relationship with unit renewal. The sixth metric of retention is part of the unit's dashboard information.

Note, for example, Key Leaders Trained. As commissioners, we are typically in contact with the unit Key 3. When we visit with the unit Key 3, we should also discuss the direct contact leaders (Cub Den Leaders, Webelos Den Leaders, and their assistants), who are not yet trained, and offer them available training resources. We know trained leaders provide a better program for the youth.

Also, note the unit size for Cub Scouts. The threshold is set at 20, which is actually below the national average of pack sizes. It has been found that units that fell below this threshold are less likely to complete a unit renewal. This size threshold helps to establish a typical den unit for each grade level with at least 3-4 youth in each den. Similarly, for Troops, a threshold of 12 accommodates two patrols of 5 youth. Still, it enables the opportunity for the senior patrol leader of the youth leadership and an assistant, which is fundamental in the Scouts BSA Program.

Data is populated through Scoutbook Plus and other Scouting America systems. The **shaded metrics**, Leadership for Crews and Posts, and Outdoor Activity for all programs, are dependent on what is entered at the unit level. Our technology systems make it easy for unit leaders to enter only a date for when the activity occurred via My.Scouting or Scoutbook Plus.

However, it is up to the unit whether or not to enter that information. What might seem to be a lack of advancement/leadership and outdoor/superactivity **only means no one entered the information, not that those things did not occur.**

Unit Connections

Meaningful conversations have many positive outcomes:

- **Building relationships:** Connections facilitate the establishment of strong relationships built on trust, respect, and shared goals. These relationships form the backbone of successful teamwork and collaboration.
- **Enhancing conversations:** Strong connections begin with knowledge to enable open communication channels. When individuals feel connected, they are more likely to express their thoughts, concerns, and ideas freely, leading to better understanding and problem-solving.
- **Driving collaboration:** Connected individuals and groups are more inclined to collaborate effectively towards common objectives. They leverage each other's strengths, resources, and expertise to achieve shared outcomes that benefit everyone involved.

- **Fostering support:** Connections create a network of support where individuals can seek help, guidance, and encouragement from one another.
- **5. Creating & growing partnerships:** Connections lay the groundwork for establishing and nurturing partnerships. These partnerships, built on mutual trust and shared interests, can lead to new opportunities, innovative solutions, and long-term success.
- **6. Changing Lives:** Connections have the power to transform lives by providing access to new resources, perspectives, and opportunities. Through meaningful interactions and relationships, individuals can achieve personal growth, overcome challenges, and reach their full potential.

Connection Guides

To aid commissioners in facilitating a conversation with unit leaders, a set of Connection Guides is available. There are guides for discussing each of the six metrics. **All guides are accessible from the unit and district dashboards**, and each follows a similar pattern of offering several leading questions to help guide a unit-level conversation.

Scanning this QR code will also enable direct access to the library of connection guides.

Unit Goals

Conversations with unit leaders may lead to opportunities for formulating unit goals. This entails recognizing what is going well, aiding the unit in pinpointing areas for program improvement, engaging with the unit to establish their vision for success, and providing support for that vision.

Establishing goals can be pivotal in the development of thriving units. Commissioners might collaborate closely with units to establish goals and address challenges.

The unit maintains complete autonomy in determining their goals, whether they choose to have them detailed, simple, or none at all, with the commissioner available to assist them throughout the process.

Unit Support

Finally, commissioners provide unit support by following up regularly, being available to answer questions, and ensuring the unit has the resources to achieve their goals.

Just remember, there are various types of units out there, and each one requires different types of support.

Record what you do to support the units you serve in Commissioner Tools. The information you record is valuable for tracking unit opportunities and successes over time. This is also useful to district leadership if you are no longer able to serve that unit; they won't have to start all over to gather information.

Know Your Unit – 45 minutes (slides 16-28)

Understand Your Unit

Stay connected with the chartered organizations of the units you serve.

- Meet and encourage the orientation of the chartered organization representative.
- Meet the head of the organization and explain that your role is to help the units.
- Help develop a good relationship between the unit's leadership and the chartered organization leadership.

Know the neighborhood in which your units are located.

- Help graduating members of one program join the next level of Scouting.
- Identify potential sources for new youth members.
- Cultivate men and women of good moral character who might become Scouting leaders.
- Learn about resources and characteristics of the neighborhood that might impact a unit's program.

The Unit Key 3

- The Key 3 of a unit is the unit leader, committee chair, and charter organization representative. They are the unit leaders with whom you should have the most contact.
- Developing an effective Key 3 isn't easy, but experience has taught us one thing: wherever we have an engaged, effective Key 3, we do a better job of delivering the promise of Scouting.

New Member Coordinator

- Another vital unit position, alongside Unit Key 3, is that of a new member coordinator.
- Starting and sustaining strong membership in a unit depends not only on attracting new members but also on engaging youth and their families in the unit experience so that they remain.
- The role of the new member coordinator is to ensure that both of these keys to success take place. These are also commissioner priorities.

The Commissioner and Safeguarding Youth

- Scouters must know Scouting America's policies regarding youth protection.
- Monitor the status of Safeguarding Youth training for the adult leaders of the units you serve. Ensure they renew their training as required. The unit's dashboard provides real-time access to information on the training status of your unit leaders, particularly as it relates to SYT.
- Assist your units in following the policies and submitting registration applications for background checks. **No one can register or re-register for Safeguarding Youth Training that has expired.**
- **All volunteers are required to submit a one-time, signed Background Check Authorization form, authorizing periodic background checks.**
- Know who to contact when a Youth Protection violation event is reported.

Unit Resources

The national Scouting America website, **scouting.org**, offers valuable resources to help units build programs that attract and retain Scouts and Scouters.

Stay current on program content for the units you serve, whether at the Pack, Troop, Crew, or Ship program of Scouting.

The **Scouting America Learn Center** is a valuable training resource for familiarizing yourself with Scouting's programs. **Commissioners are encouraged to take position-specific training relevant to the units they serve.**

Making the Connection

Here are some ideas on how to guide the connection now that you are together:

(Remember that getting to know them is the first step before you address anything else)

- **Review needs together:** Discuss the trends and potential concerns. This collaborative review helps ensure everyone is on the same page.
- **Facilitate discussion:** Ask open-ended questions to encourage the unit leader and other leaders to share their perspectives on the challenges and potential solutions. Actively listen to their input. (Examples: "What do you think is contributing to the low membership?", "What are some barriers to getting Scouts to camp?", "What resources would be most helpful?")
- **Brainstorm solutions:** Collaborate to generate potential outreach activities, program enhancements, or other strategies to address the identified issues. Encourage creative thinking and explore various options. Offer examples from other successful units, but avoid being prescriptive.
- **Focus on actionable steps:** Encourage unit leaders to identify specific goals and actionable steps that will help them achieve success. Who will do what by when? How can you support them?
- **Resource sharing:** Provide information about relevant training courses, program resources, funding opportunities, or other support available from the council or district.
- **Confirm next steps:** Summarize the agreed-upon action steps and record in **Commissioner Tools** who the unit has assigned responsibility to take the actions they established. Ensure the unit leader understands what they need to do and how you can assist them.
- **Schedule follow-up:** Offer additional support.

Methods of Connecting

There are many ways to connect with units.

Reveal the following on the slide following the discussion:

- Visit a unit meeting
- Visit a committee meeting
- Visit a unit activity (e.g., district/council event)
- Individual contact (e.g., at roundtable, private meeting or a chance encounter)
- A meaningful phone conversation
- Two-way email exchange (e.g, discussing a unit problem) with text messages (as a follow-up)

- Remote/video conferencing – if not able to meet in person

Discuss the appropriate use of each and the advantages of a combination of contact types.

Frequency of Your Connections - Discussion: When to make/frequency of connections?

Reveal the following on the slide following the discussion:

- Make as many connections as needed to meet the needs of the unit
- Recommended at least monthly
- Prioritize contacts based on what is most needed

Some basic ground rules for unit visits

- Call in advance to ensure the visit is convenient.
- The commissioner should not participate in the meeting, except to be introduced.
- Uniforms should be worn and should conform to the appropriate uniform inspection sheet.

Perspective

- Your personal experience should help inform, but not control, how you interact.
- Units are different – they have different sizes, different chartered partners, and different leaders.
- Chartered organizations and even the unit itself can have different expectations and priorities.

Remember that there are eight Scouting methods, and each unit may interpret the use of those methods differently.

Providing Support

We all want to be understood and perceived as intelligent and competent, but we want to empower leaders to discover the answers to their problems on their own, so asking questions is better than giving directions.

We help them achieve the Scouting America mission of serving more youth through a high-quality program by sharing resources that assist them in delivering an improved program.

Knowledge Expectations

As a commissioner, we have a wealth of knowledge and resources. But we don't need to know everything. It's better to take questions and deliver correct answers later than give an incorrect answer immediately.

As a commissioner, we have a wealth of knowledge and resources.

- But we don't need to know everything. It's better to take questions and deliver correct answers later than give an incorrect answer immediately.
- Follow through. Do what you say you are going to do.
- Provide information that will help the unit, rather than demonstrating your knowledge.
- Provide information and assistance that can be trusted to build confidence and establish trust.

We need to be able to identify needs, available resources, and help units succeed.

Making Connections - Discussion: Do's and Don'ts:

Buzz Groups Form two buzz groups, one to make a list of good practices for commissioner contacts with units, and the other to make a list of bad practices.

Allow up to 4 minutes for discussion. Then have the buzz groups report back to the class.

Some example do's and don'ts follow:

DO's

- Visit often - Visit different types of meetings/activities
- Smile – Be Positive
- Bring something (e.g., a flyer for an upcoming event or news of an upcoming program change)
- Talk to several leaders and some youth
- Be cognizant of your body language
- Listen – actively and empathetically
- Ask if there's anything you can do to help
- Check your ego at the door
- Follow up on questions you couldn't answer
- Follow up on promises
- Follow up with a Thank You
- Respond promptly to messages

DON'TS

- Act as the uniform police
- Enter your visit while you're there
- Be late
- Overstep your bounds
- Take sides
- Over post in electronic communications
- Make things up – You will be found out
- Take too much of the unit leader's time – He/She has a meeting to run
- Start sentences with "You" if you're saying something negative

Give advice directly if not asked for (Avoid "Should")

Focus on Relationships

Our primary focus is ensuring the unit's success. Keep these key points in mind. As you are delivering service, remember that the unit's priorities and goals must be the primary focus.

10 – MINUTE BREAK

The First Unit Connection – 45 minutes (slides 30-48)

What do you do to prepare for making your first unit connection with your newly assigned unit? Think of what you would do to prepare for an interview for a new job. You learn as much as you

can about the company you are applying to. It's the same here.

This is where Commissioner Tools come in. It is a source of a wide variety of information about units, as well as a place to record notes.

Pre-Connection Preparation (slides 31-41)

Each unit has a My.Scouting dashboard with a large amount of helpful information that will help you do some research before meeting with them.

- **Review unit Information:** Utilize available resources (e.g., unit dashboards, unit metrics, membership records, advancement reports, activity calendars) to identify potential areas for discussion and improvement. Look for trends, gaps, and areas where the unit might need assistance. Also, look for what they're doing really well.
- **Remember that getting to know them is the first step before addressing any other issues.**
- **Identify key topics:** Based on the data review, determine the most pressing issues to address with the unit leadership. Prioritize based on impact and urgency. (Examples: low membership, stagnant advancement, lack of outdoor activities, training gaps).
- **Schedule a unit visit: Contact the unit leader to arrange** a visit at a convenient time and location. Be clear that the purpose of the connection is **not** an evaluation.
- **Prepare Questions/Discussion Points:** Outline specific questions to ask and topics to discuss. Consider potential solutions and resources you can offer, using the Connection Guides as a reference for your own use.

My.Scouting

Access to unit information begins by logging in to My.Scouting. If you do not have a My.Scouting account, be sure to sign up for one.

Commissioners are granted access to a dashboard tailored to their specific role. Once logged in, click on Menu in the upper left corner, and scroll down to your district as indicated in the red box. Then select Commissioner Tools.

Commissioner Tools is a suite of online tools designed for research, record-keeping, and the analysis of trends and data within units.

District Dashboard

This is a view of a **district** dashboard. It provides all the necessary information about your district. You will see the district dashboard after selecting Commissioner Tools in the My.Scouting app on both the web and mobile apps. At the top, you will see a list of key district leaders. Notice that they are all in blue. The names are hyperlinks that provide contact information for each person. The top right section displays the number of units in the district and the number with a commissioner assigned. The Commissioner sections display the number of commissioners registered in the district and the number assigned to a unit(s). To navigate to the units, select "**View Units**" as indicated by the red box.

A listing of all the units in the district will open. Navigate to the desired unit and then select **View Dashboard** at the top.

Unit Dashboard (slides 22-29)

This is a unit dashboard.

This **Unit Summary** provides valuable information that commissioners can use when working with units.

At the top of the page, you'll see the unit metrics. The metric summary indicates which metric has met the threshold with a Fleur de Lis icon, versus a circle with a dash indicating that it has not been met. Clicking on the blue circle displays a chart showing the thresholds for all of them. Notice that the Youth Retention percentage is shown at the top.

The unit meeting location is listed and can be viewed by clicking on **View Map**.

The **Key Unit Leaders** heading provides the names of the unit's leaders. Functional roles may be here in addition to the Key 3. Below that is the name of the assigned unit commissioner. Unit leaders will have similar information on their unit dashboard. Sometimes you will notice that not all positions are filled. This may be a discussion topic.

Note that the name of each key leader is highlighted in blue. These are hotlinks that provide contact information, such as phone numbers and email addresses.

Last in this section is information related to the **Unit Charter**, including whether the charter has been posted and the unit's expiration date. If a printable copy of the charter is needed, clicking on "**View Charter**" will enable it.

Volunteer Leadership

This section highlights essential training information, including the total number of registered adults. At a glance, you can note if the unit needs leaders to complete necessary training, particularly SYT. To view the details of what leaders are missing in training, click the 'Download Report' link. These two reports can be printed for use during an upcoming unit leader visit for helpful discussion.

Roundtable Information

At the top of this section is the unit's attendance over the past three months. To view more information on attendance frequency, click 'Download Report'.

As a unit commissioner, knowing if a unit is participating in roundtable is important. If no leaders are attending roundtable, this would be an excellent conversation to have with the unit. By having at least one person attend a roundtable meeting each month, valuable information can be brought back to the unit to help strengthen the unit's program for their youth.

You'll also note in this section when the **Next Roundtable** meeting is, where it's held, a virtual meeting link if the district uses that option, and even who the roundtable commissioner is, which you can contact simply by clicking on their name for any necessary information.

As you progress down the dashboard, you will find a summary of **Youth Membership**. It shows the number of new youth who have joined over the past year, as well as total unit membership. This helps determine whether the unit is growing, declining, or maintaining its current level. The **Age Distribution** will also indicate if there are potential risks in the unit within different age groups. Information of this nature could be very important during a conversation with the unit leader regarding either recruitment or identifying other aspects of youth membership that require attention.

Advancements follow youth membership. You can view unit advancement information. Most units will need to enter advancement information in either Scoutbook or Internet Advancement to receive their awards. A unit with a solid program will, by its very nature, have advancement activity. If not, then it is time for a meaningful discussion.

Next is **Unit Activities**. If no information is listed in the **Unit Activities**, that can mean one of two things. Either no activities are taking place, or just no data is being entered. Again, this is an excellent conversation topic to have with unit leaders. If there is no advancement or unit activities, the youth are more likely to drop out.

After the Connection

Once you have finished meeting with the unit leaders, it's time to summarize your conversations.

- **Document the visit by** creating a written record of the connection, including the topics discussed, the agreed-upon action steps, and the date of the next connection. This is your unit connection log. While addressing challenges, also acknowledge and celebrate the unit's strengths and successes.
- **Follow up** by contacting the unit leader before the scheduled follow-up to check in on progress and offer assistance. The commissioner's role is to facilitate and support, not to take over. Empower the unit leaders to develop and implement their own solutions and provide guidance on goal setting as needed.
- **Provide continued support.** Change takes time. Be patient and persistent in your efforts to support the unit's growth and improvement. Attend unit events, offer guidance, and connect the unit leaders with other resources as needed.
- **Maintain confidentiality:** Respect the confidentiality of information shared during unit visits.
- Use the **Unit Connections: A Commissioner's Guide to Positive Impact, located in the Help Guide within Commissioner Tools, for guidance on recording** your entry.

Document in Commissioner Tools (slides 43-48)

Here is a section of the unit dashboard that shows Unit Connections that have been recorded.

When recording a unit connection, you will notice the topical categories related to unit metrics and a section dedicated to any goals that may have been discussed during the connection.

Add New Connection

From here, you can select "Add New Connection".

When entering a new unit connection, the page will display this screen. Each unit metric is listed for providing comments, but any (1 or more) can be optionally selected, as required. Commissioners can choose any number or combination of these topics to include an “Other” category if the connection did not involve discussion of any of the primary unit metrics. **Always remember that we are recording comments, not scores.**

Once a category has been selected, a new comment box will open for commissioners to enter their discussion points. If needed, there is an optional “Add Goal” at the bottom of every comment box to record any goal-setting discussions.

Unit conversations may lead to opportunities for formulating unit goals. This entails recognizing and building on achievements, helping the unit pinpoint areas for program improvement or enhancement. This provides an opportunity for you to engage with the unit, helping them establish their own goals and offering support for those goals, specifically membership growth.

Establishing goals can be pivotal in planning and enhancing thriving units. Commissioners might collaborate closely with units to develop goals and address challenges. Scheduled meetings with the units ensure adequate groundwork, although multiple sessions may be needed to achieve their goals.

The unit maintains complete autonomy in determining its goals. **The unit may choose to have them or not.** Commissioners are available to assist them throughout the process.

If the “**Other**” category is selected, it continues the connection that did not involve discussion of any of the primary unit metrics. There are some suggested topics listed, but you may enter information of any kind. A goal-setting option is provided here if the unit chooses to develop a goal that is not necessarily tied to a primary metric.

Commissioner Tools Summary

These new features enable commissioners to establish strong relationships and enhance their understanding of the units they serve, ultimately delivering impactful results.

10 – MINUTE BREAK

District Unit Service – 20 minutes (slides 50-68)

Unit Service Organization

Now that we have discussed your interactions with a unit, let’s talk about how that fits into a district. A district’s commissioner corps serves as the link between the district and its local units. It’s essential to understand how commissioners are organized so that you can provide the best possible support for your units and identify who supports you as a unit commissioner.

Commissioner Support

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

- Unit commissioners
- Administrative commissioners
- Roundtable commissioners

Unit Commissioner

Your role as a Unit Commissioner is to be **THE SINGLE BEST RESOURCE** a unit leader has for assistance. Being the single best resource doesn't mean that you know the answer to every question a unit leader asks; but it does mean you should be the first person a unit leaders turn to when they have a question they can't answer, and you find the answer and deliver it as soon as you can.

Administrative Commissioner

Each district has a commissioner. The district commissioner is an administrative commissioner.

The district commissioner works directly with the district chair and the district professional as part of the **district Key 3**. District commissioners lead the district team of commissioners to ensure that all units are well cared for throughout the year, paying special attention to new units, as these units are the most vulnerable to not renewing their charters.

The district commissioner supports the district staff, guiding unit commissioners to the appropriate resources.

Administrative Commissioners

Assistant district commissioners may be assigned to specific units within the district, and they supervise the unit commissioners who serve those units.

Administrative commissioners are *not* unit commissioners. Their responsibility is to *find and support* unit commissioners.

Roundtable Commissioner

The **district roundtables** fall under the **guidance** of the **roundtable commissioner**. This individual oversees the district roundtables in all program areas, reports to the district commissioner, and works with the district structure.

Roundtable programs are implemented by the roundtable commissioners for Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts.

Roundtables are another form of unit service.

Monthly Commissioner Staff Meeting

Commissioners should meet monthly to plan and review all necessary unit service tasks, ensuring a well-coordinated unit program and stable unit operation. Anything less loses momentum, shortchanges the ongoing training required, and prevents you and your district commissioner from ensuring that dynamic unit service is happening.

As a unit commissioner, you should come prepared to discuss with your district commissioner observations you have made from recent connections with your units. This meeting sets the stage for how you perform your duties in service to your units.

District Commissioner Staff Organization

This is a typical organizational structure for a district commissioner's staff.

- Administrative commissioners are represented in yellow
- Unit service commissioners are displayed in green
- Roundtable commissioners are displayed in orange

Remember, this is just one possible way a district commissioner can organize their staff. A district commissioner has the latitude to organize unit service to meet the needs of their district.

What Success Looks Like

Using the actionable information you record in your *Commissioner Tools Connection Log*, unit commissioners can see:

Their IMPACT on units:

- Through regular connections with units, summaries of those connections are recorded in *Commissioner Tools*.
- Units are demonstrating sustained growth.
- The strengths and needs of the units are captured in *Commissioner Tools*.
- The needs of units served are linked to the district operating committee's resources
- Units renew their charters on time.

Collaboration:

- Volunteers and professionals provide feedback.
- The leaders of the units provide feedback and view you as a trusted advisor and call when they have issues.

District Structure

We've mentioned the district several times so far. Let's examine the structure of local Scouting and the role of the unit commissioner within that structure.

Scouting America is organized into local councils. These councils are organized into smaller territories called districts. For the next few minutes, we will explore how districts operate to support their council and the units they serve.

District Purpose

The purpose of a district is to support the units in their communities, enabling them to deliver a quality program to the youth they serve.

District Leadership

Another key element is the coordination and mobilization of resources to support the unit, ensuring the growth and success of those units within the district's territory.

These resources include volunteers, who are our greatest asset. All the positions shown are volunteer positions, except for the district executive. Chartered organization representatives are voting members of the district because of their position. Council fiscal resources provide facilities and materials to units, as well as program knowledge, which our volunteers often provide.

Four Functions of the District

All districts are responsible for carrying out four standard functions.

These four functions are the pieces to the puzzle that make up your district:

- Membership
- Fund Development
- Program
- Unit Service

We will briefly discuss each of these functions.

Membership

The primary function of the district committee is to promote membership growth through the development of new units, recruitment, retention of members, and transitions from Arrow of Light to Scouts BSA, as well as from Scouts BSA to Venturing and Sea Scouts.

Fund Development

The second function of the district committee is **Fund Development**. The objective is to see that the district provides its share of funds to the total council operating budget.

Funds are raised from a variety of sources, including Friends of Scouting, product sales like popcorn, special events, and district activity budgets.

Program

The third function of the district committee is **Program**.

This committee functions to assist Scouting units with camp promotions, activities, and civic service, as well as training adult volunteers, youth advancement, and recognition.

Unit Service

The fourth function of the district committee is **Unit Service**.

Coaching and consultation for unit adults helps ensure the success of every Scouting unit.

This is the function commissioners perform.

Interrelationships

The order in which the functions are listed is not meant to suggest the order of their importance, but the natural interrelationship and flow of the functions:

- The Scouting movement cannot achieve its purpose without first organizing units and enrolling members.
- The district cannot support its units without the necessary funds.
- The district supports unit programs through its program functions and unit service.

All four functions are equally important and necessary. If one suffers from a lack of attention, the district's work suffers as well.

As you progress through training, you will notice that the course content commonly follows these four functional areas, with an ever-present emphasis on volunteers.

When you successfully have all four functions working together in your district, outstanding Scouting programs will be the result.

Standard District Organization

Each district, regardless of size, has a district committee to coordinate the work of the district. A typical district usually would have an operating committee for each of the four functions, including a commissioner staff for the unit service function. Let's take a moment to identify where each of the four functions fit into our organization chart.

The exact method of organizing a district is flexible and should be tailored to the needs and characteristics of the communities within your district.

The Unit and Membership Renewal Processes – 15 minutes (slides 69-79)

Commissioners participate in and support the timely and error-free completion of renewals.

Unit Renewal – Where to Start

In the **unit's** Organization Manager, unit members with a Key-3 role or a Key 3 delegate role will have access to the Unit Renewal Tab. When opened, the validation process runs automatically and displays any issues that may arise. The appropriate member proceeds with unit renewal from here.

Unit Renewal

As units prepare to renew, they should keep these items in mind:

- This process renews the unit, but not its members, which is a separate process based on the joining or last renewal date.
- Encourage units to start preparing at least 2 months before their expiration date.
- A unit has a two-month lapse period after the unit expires. After that, the unit is dropped.
- It is recommended that unit leaders pre-check and see if any validation issues are showing. The most common is Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT) dates for adult leaders, but all checks are still conducted, such as ensuring correct leadership positions are filled, the number of youth, and SYT completion. Validation is performed at the time of renewal. If things change a day or so later, the validation will change.
- Verify the leadership positions and ensure the correct names are assigned to the correct roles. If not, use "Position Manager," also found in Organization Manager, to edit, wait overnight, and then validate again.

Helping Units Prepare

When helping units prepare for Unit renewal, the unit commissioner should meet with the unit Key 3 at least 90 days before the unit is due to renew to ensure they understand the separate processes for unit renewal and membership renewal. Units should be encouraged to appoint a

renewal champion. This person will be responsible for renewing the unit using the renewal system. This person can be one of the Key 3 or a key delegate. To initiate the unit renewal process, the champion will need to verify that all members have accurate email addresses, that the required leadership positions are filled, and that SYT is up to date.

Commissioners should remind units that payment options are available for unit and membership renewals, and they need to decide which options to use.

Commissioners should then document the units' preparations in Commissioner Tools, using the "Other" category. This will be a reference when help is needed.

The Annual Unit Charter Agreement

A charter agreement and maybe a facility use agreement are required to complete the unit renewal process. All the different forms of agreements are available to commissioners and unit volunteers at the link shown on the slide. Commissioners should become familiar with the terms of the charter.

The charter agreement is signed by the Charter Organization, the Charter Organization Representative, the Unit Committee Chair, and the Local Scouting America Council.

Note: Although the Annual Charter Agreement and any use agreement are not included in the online unit renewal process, they are still required for the unit to be considered renewed.

Membership Renewal

Commissioners should ensure that units' members are renewing on time.

Commissioner Role

The unit Key 3 will get monthly email reports of who is due to renew.

Although individual memberships are not renewed as part of the unit charter renewal process, commissioners may encourage units to have a unit committee member responsible for unit membership. The New Member Coordinator could be an ideal choice to perform this function. They can access key reports in the **Organization Manager** or the **Roster Tool**.

This report lists everyone due to renew within the next two months, as well as those whose registration has lapsed.

Commissioners can help units prepare for unit and member renewals by asking unit leaders:

- Is your unit ready?
- Has the unit decided whether to employ Unit Pay, Self-pay, or a combination? Has that decision been **communicated well** with the unit's parents?
- Has the unit selected auto or manual approval for adult renewals? It's a unit's decision, but it's worth noting that the adults have already been approved.
- Do your members/parents understand what they do or do not need to do?
- Is everyone's email address correct in scouting.org, not just Scoutbook?

- Does every Scout under 18 have an associated parent's/guardian's email?

Communication is the key to success!!

Members Opt-Out Report – Commissioner Role

This Roster Report lists all members who have OPTED not to renew.

Commissioners might encourage a unit leader or New Member Coordinator to review this review monthly and follow up to determine why these individuals chose not to renew their membership.

District or Council Commissioners – either individually or in conjunction with the membership and/or professionals – should consider developing teams to contact members who have opted out, to learn why, and, if appropriate, invite them to return or visit other units. These calls should be carefully scripted.

Charter Certificates

Once unit renewal is complete, the new charter certificate is available. Charter certificates can be printed by a member of the unit Key 3 for presentation. Commissioners can also print the charter certificate from the unit dashboard in Commissioner Tools by clicking the “View Charter” button.

Charter Presentation

On the Commissioner's webpage, under *Internet Rechartering*, the Charter Certificate “FAQ/How To” section provides instructions on how to customize the charter certificate for your units and print it out for presentation.

Stage the presentation at a regular meeting or activity of the chartered organization. This serves to accentuate the character of the relationship, puts the organization in a better position to recognize its unit leaders, and assures attendance of the most significant possible number of the organization's members.

The charter presentation should be directed to the chartered organization rather than the unit itself.

Commissioner Recognition and Resources – 15 minutes (slides 80-83)

Learning is a lifelong activity. Commissioners must continually adjust skills to provide quality service to units. Therefore, commissioners should view learning as an essential part of their Scouting lives—every month, every year.

Continuous learning and training are essential, but so is recognizing commissioners for their efforts. Review the commissioner recognition sections of the national website and encourage the recognition of all commissioners. Some are earned; others bestow some.

These are the tenure requirements to earn each of these recognitions. See the Commissioner Engagement Section of the Commissioner's Website for the remaining requirements for these awards.

Arrowhead Honor – 1 year

Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service – 2 years (consecutive) in the same unit

Commissioner Key – 3 years (in a 5-year period) as a registered commissioner

Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award – 5 years of unit service (non-consecutive)

Additional Training

These are training opportunities that you should take advantage of whenever you can.

- **Scouting America Learn Center** offers online orientation modules designed to help new commissioners become familiar with the various Scouting programs. They also familiarize new commissioners with the Scouting America organizational structure and the aims and methods of the Scouting program. **It is recommended that you review the modules related to the types of units you will be serving.**
- Make every effort to attend your district commissioner's monthly meeting. He or she will usually include a short training topic that will help you serve your units better.
- Check to see if your council hosts a College of Commissioner Science. During the college, you will receive advanced commissioner training as you progress from your Bachelor's degree to the Doctorate of Commissioner Science. The courses offered at a college will cover a wide range of topics that will help you with almost any situation you face as you serve your units.
- Commissioners are first and foremost leaders. If you have not already done so, please seek out the highest level of leadership training that Scouting America provides to its leaders- Wood Badge.
- Training at the national level is available at the Philmont Training Center. During Commissioners' Week at PTC, the conferences feature the latest tools and techniques, discussions, and idea sharing led by a faculty of experienced commissioners.
- Impact sessions are weekend training events conducted in person and virtually across the country.

Remember that training is a continuous process, and you can always seek help when needed.

Commissioner Manual and Resources

The previous commissioner manuals have been replaced with 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, or a document for tablet, phone, or other digital device. At a minimum, a unit commissioner should read the "Providing Unit Service" document, along with the "Linking District Resources" and "Charter Renewal" documents.

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 library.

Commissioner Website

This is the Commissioner page on the Scouting America website. You can scroll down the left-hand column and view all the topics that are there to help you perform your duties as a unit commissioner. Some of the topics include the Commissioner Newsletter e-Blast, Commissioner Engagement, Awards and Recognition, Technology for Commissioners, Commissioner Manuals and Resources, among others.

You are encouraged to visit this site frequently and explore all the information available to you.

Summary/Questions/Comments – 10 minutes

Wreath of Service

Scouting America 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 Scouting America to perform the duties and undertake the responsibilities of a unit commissioner, as well as your acceptance of that obligation.

As a commissioner, you have made a personal commitment to Scouting.

- 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 unit leaders, and to lend a helping hand to fellow Scouters

Congratulations on completing the first step in your education as a commissioner!

Ask your district commissioner or assistant district commissioner to pair you with a mentor to guide you through completing your onboarding progress record. It will help you internalize the knowledge you have gained in this course and guide you on your path to earning your Arrowhead Honor.

Note to instructor: Upon completing this training, please provide each participant with a **training card** so that onboarding mentor/coaches can verify their attendance.

Handout: Unit Commissioner Onboarding and Orientation Guide – 1 per person

Printing Instructions: This document is meant to be printed as a booklet.

Printer settings -Landscape, 2-sided, Flip on short edge.

This Onboarding Orientation Guide provides new or newly placed commissioners with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the expectations of their position under the guidance of an experienced commissioner, their coach/mentor. They will be guided through the application of those skills in their new position. In this way, success in the new role is more likely to be achieved, benefiting both Scouts and Scout units.