

# BCS 115

## Commissioners – The Single Best Resource!



<b>Time allotted</b>	50 minutes
<b>Teaching format</b>	Instructor-led discussions with PowerPoint support.

### Resources

<b>Handouts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BCS 115 – Unit Service Culture Definition – 1 per person</li><li>• BCS 115 – Resource Links for Commissioners – 1 per person</li></ul>
<b>Equipment and materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BCS 115 – Commissioners – The Single Best Resource! course plan</li><li>• BCS 115 – Commissioners – The Single Best Resource! PowerPoint presentation</li><li>• Computer and projector</li></ul>
<b>Resources for additional participant learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/manuals/">https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/manuals/</a></li><li>• Unit Service Core Concepts 8.15.2025</li><li>• <a href="https://www.scouting.org/programs">https://www.scouting.org/programs</a></li><li>• <a href="https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/newsletter-eblast/">https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/newsletter-eblast/</a></li></ul>

### Course Connections

<b>Connections to other CCS courses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BCS 103 – Linking District Resources</li><li>• BCS 108 – Mining Internet Resources</li></ul>
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### Presentation Outline

#### Introduction and Course Objectives – 2 minutes

Introduce yourself to the class.

An effective commissioner provides unit leadership with information and guidance tailored to their specific program, whether it is Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, or Exploring. Change is a constant throughout national-level programs, and disseminating this information is essential to ensure quality programs for all Scouting America youth participants and program participants.

Introduce the learning objectives, noting that by the end of this session, each participant should...

- **Understand** the culture of unit service
- **Describe** the attributes of each Scouting America program
- **Know** the resources available

Commissioners provide unit leadership with information and guidance on the latest changes in all Scouting America programs. Providing unit service is the same regardless of the type of unit.

This makes the commissioner the **single best resource** for unit leaders to look for the support they need.

### Commissioner Purpose

#### Being the Single Best Resource.

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

**Commented [KA1]:** I took out the old objectives and inserted our new purpose here

## The Culture of Unit Service – 10 minutes (slide 4)

### The Culture of Unit Service:

**Handout: BCS 115 – Unit Service Culture Definition – 1 per person**

For virtual presentation, consider the following:

To distribute handouts, (a) email them in advance, (b) have the facilitator email them during the session so they will arrive on time, (c) post a link in the chat line, or (d) email them after the session is over.

Commissioners have the mission of supporting units as they work with their youth in various ways. This is the statement of the unit service culture. Let's discuss the meaning/explanation of this statement.

**The instructor says:** *Write down two or three ideas/activities of what "support" means...* (Give about 2 minutes) Ask participants to share with someone nearby or share with the group, depending on the group's size. (Try to weave some of their ideas into the following descriptions)

### Be the Heart

The Scouting units are the heart of Scouting America. The unit delivers the Scouting program to the youth and the Scouting's success depends on the unit's ability to deliver the program. Just as our heart keeps us alive, units keep Scouting vibrant and effective. Commissioners provide unique support to units as they create a safe, welcoming environment as well as deliver the Scouting program effectively.

### Build Relationships

Commissioners must develop relationships with the unit leaders they serve based on mutual respect, candor, and trust.

**The instructor says:** *Think of something you can do in each of these categories (mutual respect, candor, and trust).* Take 2-3 minutes to share/ask for any other thoughts.

When visiting a unit meeting (such as a committee meeting, planning session, or troop meeting), commissioners should be prepared to share something with the unit leaders. As we enter a meeting, greet the leaders and allow the unit meeting to begin. Watch and listen to the unit's activities based on what we know from our previous visits and from reviewing Connections in Commissioner Tools.

Always say 'Thank you' as you leave and offer a positive comment about something you saw. If appropriate, ask if there is anything you can do/questions that the unit has before you leave the meeting. This careful cultivating of relationships over time will result in your units seeking you out when they have concerns or questions.

### **Change Lives**

We know and have witnessed how Scouting changes the lives of both youth and adults involved in the program. Scouting's values are adopted. Scouters and Scouts become more engaged citizens, strengthening their communities, our nation, and the world.

## **Unit Similarities and Uniqueness – 15 minutes (slides 5-10)**

### **Youth of Scouting America**

Scouting America serves youth from age 5 until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

- All the units share a common Oath and Law
- Even more importantly, they share a common mission:
  - To prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.
- And vision:
  - To prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

### **Unit Similarities**

There are some constants between the unit types of Scouting America.

Each unit has:

- Unit Leader and Assistants  
For each type of unit, the unit leader, along with their assistants, works directly with the youth, initially with adult-led dens in Cub Scouts and transitioning toward youth-led and planned activities with Scouts BSA and the Older Youth Programs.
- Unit Committee/Committee Chair  
The unit committee collaborates to complete all tasks outside of the direct contact program.

### **Program Training**

With each unit, adult leadership changes occasionally. Training is the best way for new leaders to understand the scope of the program in which they are involved.

Training for adults registered in Scouting America is program-specific. Almost all training is online and is taken in modules during different periods of learning a position's expectations. There is often support from other members of the unit or the commissioner's staff if additional clarifications or information are needed.

As a commissioner, as you learn about the unit, you will access the report that details the unit's adult training. At an appropriate time, ensure the accuracy of the records. If training is not complete, consider ways that would support the leaders in finishing their position-specific training.

**Instructor Note:** *Slides 8-10 are "Program Overview" about the unique properties of each type of unit that will be shared. Move through quickly.*

### **Cub Scouts**

Cub Scouting is for youth, either girls or boys, who are in kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The unit is known as a pack and is led by the cubmaster. Dens are organized by grade level. The den leader leads activities with support from a parent or assistant den leader. Dens usually meet weekly to work through program adventures. Sometimes adventure activities are completed with parents.

The pack meets monthly at a pack meeting, where parents and Scouts gather for a special event designed by the unit to recognize advancement and participate in an activity or game that involves all.

The pack committee usually meets monthly to ensure the yearly plan is implemented, allowing enough time to engage parents in helping with the major events.

Cubs camp with a parent/family. The number of campouts depends on the Pack. Additional adult training is required for an overnight event. Day outdoor activities and service projects occur frequently for members of the pack.

### **Scouts BSA**

Scouts BSA is for youth, either girls or boys, aged 10 through 17 (up to 18<sup>th</sup> birthday). The unit is known as a troop and is led by the senior patrol leader with the support of the Scoutmaster. The troops are either girls or boys and, at times, are linked by a shared committee. Youth are organized into working units called patrols. Activities are led by the youth of the troop with the support of the Scoutmaster and assistants. The program is planned by a leadership group of Scouts known as the Patrol Leaders Council, which meets monthly. The youth also participate in yearly leadership training and program planning.

The Scout earns ranks by completing specific requirements and on a timeline determined by the individual Scout. The awards earned by the Scouts are formally presented at a Court of Honor, which is held three to four times throughout the year.

Troops camp regularly, often monthly. They also attend a weeklong summer camp or a High Adventure camp during the summer months. Community service is also a part of their program.

The troop committee usually meets monthly to do tasks that are not program-related. Their work frees up the unit leaders to focus their time on supporting the youth of the units.

### **Older Youth Programs**

Next are the older youth programs, those for youth 14-20 (up to 21<sup>st</sup> birthday). These allow scouts who enjoy the activities of scouting and want some that are different than in the usual troop program. A scout can be a part of a troop and an older youth program at the same time. Older Youth Programs include:

- Venturing
- Sea Scouts
- Exploring

Youth involved in these programs are 14-20 years old and work together in a mixed-gender unit. In each of these programs, the youth take a greater share of planning and executing their program, including longer, more adventurous activities.

**Venturing** - Everyone has that moment that opens their eyes to a bigger world than they ever imagined. It might happen while paddling a quiet lake, bonding with new friends around a beach bonfire, or rising to the challenge of leading an exhausted crew to the edges of adventure. Venturing empowers youth to create their own experiences while bringing Scouting values to life through high-adventure outdoor activities and challenging real-world projects.

**Sea Scouts** - For over 100 years, Sea Scouting has promoted better citizenship and improved members' boating skills through instruction and practice in water safety, boating skills, outdoor activities, social experiences, service, and knowledge of our maritime heritage.

**Exploring** offers exciting activities and mentorship for youth seeking to discover their future. Working with a local organization to sponsor a Post that allows its participants to experience some of the aspects of a specific career, such as policing, health fields, and others.

## **Knowing Your Resources – 15 minutes (slides 11 – 17)**

### **Knowing Your Resources**

As a commissioner works on developing a relationship with a unit, it is also essential to understand how a specific type of unit functions.

- Taking the unit-specific training enables a commissioner to answer questions from leaders of the unit, as well as explain how a specific type of unit should function
- Review resources that will be presented in the following slides, so you have suggestions to share when needed. Do this in bite-sized chunks that your schedule allows, so that you can understand the information. Read again when a situation arises so you can choose one or two suggestions that might work for the unit, giving them options. Also, realize that each idea can be used in unique ways depending on the unit.
- If the situation is not something you have dealt with before, consider consulting with members of your district's commissioner corps or your district commissioner. Utilize the expertise of others to determine the best way to support this unit.

## Resources

Resources for each Program (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, Lone Scout, International Scouting, Special Needs and Disabilities, STEM, and Awards Central) are found on the Commissioner Website: <https://www.scouting.org/programs>

**Instructor Note:** *Have the class scan the QR code on the slide*

## You are the information leaders; commissioners set the Standard!

You don't just pass along info—you shape how your units think about what's true, useful, and trustworthy. Commissioners are the tip of the spear when it comes to getting good information into the right hands.

So, take pride in that role. Stay sharp, be skeptical of sources, and never hesitate to consult with your committees or council for clarity. Being the best source of information isn't about knowing everything—it's about knowing where to look and who to ask.

Set the example. Help your leaders build the same habits, and you'll help the entire Scouting movement move forward smarter.

## Resource Links for Commissioners

### Handout: BCS 115 – Resource Links for Commissioners – 1 per person

These resource links provide commissioners with quick access to reliable information on nearly every aspect of Scouting America. From program development and unit support to training opportunities and administrative guidance, the list serves as a go-to reference for answers, best practices, and official materials. Whether you are helping a new unit leader, addressing membership questions, or looking for tools to strengthen program delivery, these links ensure you have the correct information at your fingertips.

**Instructor Note:** *Have the class scan the QR code on the slide*

## Connecting Unit and Information

At this point, you have established a means of communication with the unit leadership. Use open-ended questions to help them find ways to achieve their goals for success. This may include what the unit is considering, their understanding of the scope of the situation, and a possible timeframe for finding and acting upon a solution.

- The next step will involve sharing suggestions in ways that you know are preferred by the leaders of the unit.
- Share at a time when they can ask questions and collaborate.
- Link your ideas to needs that were expressed by the unit.
- Have the unit consider a limited number of ideas and work toward creating goals if they wish to do so.
- Record the plan – in Commissioner Tools!!

Remember, at all times, to follow the unit's lead and help them succeed by identifying strategies and volunteers to work toward their goals.

### **Summary/Conclusion – 5 minutes**

- The culture of unit service reminds commissioners of the behaviors, beliefs, and values that enable them to achieve our mission and fulfill our vision.
- Each unit shares common attributes based on the Scout Law and Oath with similar organization.
- Commissioners should understand how a unit functions and the resources available.

### **Questions? – 3 minutes**