

DCS 517

Understanding Your District



Time allotted	50 minutes
Teaching format	Instructor-led discussions with PowerPoint support, Activity.

Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCS 517 – Understanding Your District April 2025 Survey – 1 per person• DCS 517 – Activity Scenarios – 1 per person
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCS 517 – Understanding Your District course plan• DCS 517 – Understanding Your District PowerPoint presentation• Computer and projector
Resources for additional participant learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizing Commissioner Teams - Organizing Commissioner Teams

Course Connections

Connections to other CCS courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MCS 317 – Organizing Commissioner Teams
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Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 2 minutes (Slides 1-3)

This course aims to assist districts in identifying organization methods and strategies as outlined in the Organizing Commissioner Teams Guide (MCS 317) that best suit their units and unit commissioners. As a result, commissioners will be able to provide better service to their units.

Introduce the learning objectives, noting that by the end of this session, each participant should understand how to:

- **Align** unit service initiatives with overarching impact goals.
- **Utilize** surveys and gap analysis to make informed decisions.
- **Empower** volunteers through strategic roles and collaboration.

Identifying and Meeting Unit Needs

To begin, it's essential to set the stage for why it matters that we define unit service needs.

This process aligns initiatives with long-term impact goals, ensuring every effort contributes toward broader objectives.

By focusing on vision, we ensure all actions resonate with organizational aspirations. Meanwhile, utilizing data-driven decision-making minimizes guesswork, offering clarity and strategic direction through surveys and gap analysis.

Finally, fostering a team-oriented culture empowers volunteers by driving collaboration and optimizing resource use. Together, these pillars create a dynamic framework for effective and impactful unit service management.

Aligning Unit Service – 3 minutes (slide 4)

Clarifying Vision and Goals

- **Define Vision:** Clarifying the vision and goals is the cornerstone of any strategic service plan.
- Begin by defining the ultimate impact and the values your unit aims to uphold. This vision will act as the compass, guiding all future decisions and actions.
- **Set SMART Goals:** Develop Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound objectives.
- Next, translate this vision into SMART goals. These should be specific enough to offer direction, measurable to track progress, achievable within your resources, relevant to the unit's mission, and time-bound to create accountability.
- **Focus on Impact:** Prioritize initiatives that tangibly advance community engagement
- Lastly, keeping the focus on impact ensures initiatives are designed not for activity's sake, but to generate meaningful engagement and measurable community service impact.

Utilize Data to Make Informed Decisions – 30 minutes including 25-minute activity (slides 5-9)

Identifying Gaps and Priorities

Resource Gaps: Identify missing skills, abilities, and roles needed.

Prioritize Needs: Rank needs by impact area and underserved regions.

Optimize Resources: Realign underutilized personnel to address priority gaps.

- Once the vision and goals are clear, the next step is assessing what is needed to achieve them. Identifying resource gaps involves analyzing existing capabilities and pinpointing missing skills or roles essential for service delivery.
- This might include language skills, leadership roles, or specialized knowledge.
- Prioritizing needs ensures resources are allocated where they will have the most impact, especially in underserved areas.
- Finally, optimizing resources means strategically aligning available personnel to fill priority gaps, ensuring every team member contributes effectively. Together, these actions provide a targeted and efficient approach to meeting service needs.
- Take a moment and write down what your district's top 5 needs are....

From Lists to Action Plans

- First, let's take some time and go through the Understanding Your District Survey. Each of you should take the time to do this for your own district back home. Please read the instructions carefully
- Putting your plan into practice is where strategy becomes reality. Start by thoroughly analyzing survey results—look for recurring gaps and insights that might not be obvious at first glance. This analysis will guide your approach and help prioritize efforts.
- Next, break down larger goals into smaller, manageable tasks that can be delegated easily. Avoid overwhelming volunteers by making assignments clear and achievable.
- Finally, leverage team dynamics. Assign volunteers based on their strengths and availability, and encourage collaboration to foster a sense of ownership and collective achievement.

Understanding Your District Survey

This document is found on the Commissioner Recruiting and Retention page. It aims to assist districts in identifying the organizational methods and strategies outlined in the Organizing Commissioner Teams Guide (MCS 317) that best suit their units and unit commissioners.

This document may be used by a single administrative commissioner, a group of administrative commissioners for a district or council, or a group of commissioners (both unit and administrative). To maximize results, commissioners taking this survey should be well-informed about the district's characteristics and composition.

Our activity today will use this survey to help familiarize you with this process.

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

Activity – Understanding Your District Survey – 25 minutes (slide 8)

Handout: DCS 517- Understanding Your District Survey- 20 minutes to review.

Handout: DCS 517 – District Scenarios

Form small discussion groups of 3-5 persons, assigning them one of the scenarios. Their task is to identify priority needs and gaps using the Organization Method and Strategy Survey.

1st survey – Organizational Method:

- Read each question in the far-left “Questions” column and apply that answer (A or B) for each of the following columns (e.g., Geographic).
- Once all answers are entered on the page, calculate the total for each column by adding the values vertically. Please note there are some negative values (emphasized by red text and italics). 3) Add page totals together.

2nd survey – Organizational Strategy:

- Identify the highest two or three scores for each survey. The higher the column scores, the higher the potential to use various methods and strategies locally.
- Consider reading the sections for the two or three highest-scoring methods and strategies from the “Organizing Commissioner Teams” Guide.

Understanding Feedback and Revealing Gap – (debrief from slide 8 activity).

- Survey data is a goldmine for identifying both explicit and hidden needs within your district. Begin by facilitating group discussions with commissioners and volunteers to interpret responses collaboratively. This encourages diverse perspectives and reveals trends that may not surface through individual analysis.
- Next, dig deeper to identify hidden gaps—these are often the overlooked areas that can significantly impact service delivery if addressed.
- Finally, validate your priorities. Cross-reference these new insights against existing goals to ensure alignment, and ensure that every action step supports the most urgent and relevant unit service needs.

For your survey results... did you find a new piece of information you didn't consider before? Take a few moments to discuss.

Empowering Volunteers – 10 minutes (slides 10-11)

Organizing Tasks and Assigning Roles

- With survey insights in hand and priorities validated, the focus now shifts to execution. Begin by refining your master list of objectives — distill each broad goal into smaller, actionable tasks that are easy to assign and
- Next, assign roles strategically. This is where knowledge of your team pays off. Matching the right volunteer to the right task based on skills, interests, and availability boosts both morale and effectiveness.
- Finally, promote teamwork. Not every task requires individual effort; many can be done more effectively in groups. Shared responsibility not only enhances productivity but also builds stronger volunteer connections and retention within the district.

Driving Forward with Clear Vision and Collaboration

Let's take a moment and write these down.

- Out of these, what are your top 3 priorities? Rank them.
- Do these priorities create the biggest impact based on areas of greatest need, immediate urgency, and long-term impact?
- As we talk about these priorities and focus on impact, we have to throw out some preconceptions. We no longer say we want one commissioner to serve 3-4 units or that each unit should be visited every month. We're also facing some hard realities, like we don't need to prioritize a fun-to-serve, high-functioning unit. We need to prioritize the units that are facing challenges.
- Does this change how we prioritize needs?

Let's take a moment to share our top needs for districts/councils.

Summary/Conclusion – 3 minutes (slide 12)

Unified Vision: Stay aligned on overarching goals and keep service impact front and center.

As we wrap up, it's essential to bring everything together under a unified vision. By keeping our service impact at the forefront, we ensure that all initiatives and actions contribute to meaningful progress.

Strategic Execution: Leverage data, defined tasks, and optimal volunteer assignments for efficiency. Strategic execution is the engine behind this vision. Through thoughtful analysis of gaps, creation of actionable tasks, and strategic volunteer assignment, we drive efficiency and effectiveness across all unit service levels.

Celebrate Progress: Recognize achievements, foster morale, and continually refine service strategies.

Finally, don't forget to celebrate progress. Recognizing achievements boosts morale, reinforces commitment, and builds a resilient culture of service. Regular reflection and refinement will ensure that unit service remains dynamic, responsive, and impactful for years to come.

Questions? – 2 minutes