

MCS 316

The Unit Service Plan



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

Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCS 316 – Why do a Unit Service Plan - 1 per person • MCS 316 – The Unit Service Plan - 1 per person • MCS 316 – Detailed Assessments for Breakout Sessions- 3 of same type per breakout group • MCS 316 – Unit Service Plan Blank - 1 per person
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCS 316 – The Unit Service Plan course plan • MCS 316 – The Unit Service Plan PowerPoint presentation • Computer and projector
Resources for additional participant learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scouting.org/commissioners, Starting, Sustaining and Growing Units • MCS 316 – The Unit Service Plan document • MCS 316 – Instructor Resource Materials

Course Connections

Connections to other CCS courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCS 105 – Resolving Common Unit Problems • BCS 116 – Collaborative Assessments • MCS 304 – Service for Units at Risk • MCS 305 – Resolving Critical Issues • DCS 516 – The Unit Service Plan and the District
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Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 3 minutes

The Collaborative Assessment of a unit gives an in-depth picture of the unit, its strengths, and its needs. To work toward making systematic changes in the unit's service to youth, the Key 3 with the commissioner develops a Unit Service Plan using information from the Collaborative Assessment and other sources.

Introduce the Learning Objectives

- **Discuss** the purpose of the Unit Service Plan
- **Understand** the process of plan development
- **Implement** the Unit Service Plan

For this process to have the desired result, the commissioner must possess the insight and awareness necessary to observe and evaluate unit functions and identify the best available resources to assist with unit needs.

The Unit Service Plan Purpose—5 minutes

Handout – “Why do A Unit Service Plan?” – *is given to every participant to be shown now and used later in the class.*

For virtual presentation, the handout may be (a) sent in advance, (b) sent during class a few minutes prior to when it will be useful so it has time to get to each participant, (c) posted to a Google Drive or Drop Box or similar location where participants can access it, or (d) sent after the class ends. Posting a link in the chat line is an option, but it also creates a distraction.

The Unit Service Plan is a part of Commissioner Tools and is the actionable result of a Unit Detailed Assessment. This document is not a “one-size-fits-all” solution. It needs to be customized on what the unit needs and focused on what the units wants to achieve.

It is built upon a *collaborative* assessment of a unit’s strengths and needs. Before attempting a collaborative assessment, a unit commissioner must establish a solid relationship with a unit’s leaders based on mutual respect and an understanding of one another’s motivation for involvement in Scouting and vision of future success for the unit.

Healthy units will have a strong program, stable membership, strong leadership, trained adults, and sufficient resources to carry out its plans. These attributes will be directly measured by the parameters of the Journey to Excellence. Other units are not as strong. These units often have several areas that they need to focus on.

Every unit can benefit from a Unit Service Plan, even the strongest units in the district. For weaker units, the plan needs to be customized to address the most important needs and ensure the survival of the unit. For stronger units, the plan may be focused on supporting the unit toward achieving their specific goals to better serve their youth or to take on new initiatives.

Understand the Process of Plan Development– 20 minutes including 10-minute activity

Before Starting

Before starting, we need to understand how the unit service plan is developed. There are actions that need to occur before the development of a plan.

First, the commissioner uses commissioner tools to log their contacts, recording the commissioner's observations about the unit and its overall health based on JTE criteria.

Next, the engagement of the unit Key 3 is essential for development and execution of the service plan. The unit's strengths and needs are more accurately represented if the Key 3 works together with the unit commissioner to create the detailed assessment. This collaboration encourages the unit leadership to define what success looks like for their unit.

Finally, based on the unit's weaknesses or areas for improvement, the commissioner and unit will develop a unit service plan.

The Process of Plan Development

As the Detailed/Collaborative Assessment is completed, the commissioner and the unit leaders will have discussed several areas that could support more successful functioning of the unit. The unit now needs to prioritize the possible actions based on urgency, as well as the personnel and resources available.

We will discuss each step of the process in the next slides.

These are: *(read but not explained)*

- develop action steps
- determine who is responsible for each item
- create SMART goals
- ensure resources are available
- The unit Key 3 may also have identified some things they are struggling with, such a fund-raising or leader succession or ... (other problems, concerns).
- *(Ask for participant input, as able, to make a list that can be used with a later discussion-instructor choice-take less than a minute)*

Development of Action Steps

The unit Key 3 may have identified some things they are struggling with, such a fund-raising or leader succession or ... (other problems, concerns).

(Ask for participant input, as able, to make a list that can be used with a later discussion-instructor choice-take less than a minute)

For virtual presentation, when leading a discussion, consider whether to (a) allow participants to just speak up, (b) ask participants to post their responses in the chat line for the facilitator to read aloud, (c) ask participants to raise their hands for the instructor or facilitator to call on, or (d) choose a combination of these options.

To take notes for everyone to see, consider using (a) a whiteboard, if available in the technology platform, or (b) a PowerPoint slide in editor mode

Action steps need ideas that are recognized as leading to success. Using the standards of the Journey to Excellence can be a guide for possible actions if the steps are developed appropriately. The Detailed Assessment is also a source for these actions. Reviewing the recorded contacts can also give additional information.

The commissioner and the unit leadership look at the details of JTE and uses the metrics so the unit will know what is needed to improve in an area. This might be the number of new members to recruit, how many scouts need to be encouraged to attend a long-term camp, scheduling service projects or supporting a program that allows scouts to advance.

Now that the list has been made, there are some other things to think about:

- determine how many goals the unit leaders can work toward with the other responsibilities of unit leadership
- help the unit identify others in the unit who may be appropriate to lead the plan-or organize, monitor action steps
- consult with identified individual to be sure they are available and willing to do so

In addition, the leadership and commissioner need to recognize the unit's skills by:

- knowing what a unit has already tried to do and build on successes
- knowing the skill set of the volunteers and parents of the members
- identifying roadblocks that the unit may see and develop plans to deal with them

Finally, the priority order of the action steps is established. Ensure the most critical needs are addressed first. *(Have available the handout to hand out to each participant- Why Do a Unit Service Plan?)*

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Identify and Prioritize Goals for a Unit-Activity and Instructor-led discussion – 10-minute activity – slides 7 and 8

Instructor note: Handouts for this activity are found in the “Detailed Assessments for Breakout Sessions” folder and are listed in the Handouts section of the beginning of this course plan. Each group will have multiple copies of the same detailed assessment and each person in the group gets the same handout.

Scenario – The unit feels that they can only handle 2 items identified in their most recent Collaborative Assessment this year besides the normal activities of the unit schedule. They will also use a blank unit service plan so each participant can record their thoughts.

Each participant in group needs to represent a unit leadership position such as the Scoutmaster, the committee chair, and others. One participant needs to represent the unit commissioner. Each needs to listen to others, as they advocate for an action item that the unit should add to the Unit Service Plan.

The person who is the designated committee chair needs to be prepared to share their two action items, why they were chosen and the first action step in SMART terms.

Practice good listening skills considering about the bullet points discussed previously in your decisions.

Breakout Groups

- Each member of the group will represent a different member of the Key 3 or the commissioner.
- Each team will have a set of goals based on the scores of the Detailed Assessments, scores on the JTE scorecard, or items identified by the patrol leaders council.
- Each unit feels they can only work toward 2 new initiatives. Be prepared to share your choices and why it was important to be one of the first to be worked toward.
- The team will prioritize and develop the first steps of two action items.

The Instructor will support debriefing of USP (Unit Service Plans)-goal selections, actions to take, and the “why” of the choice. Spend about 5 minutes reviewing a few of the groups’ decisions on their action steps.

For virtual presentation, distribute the handouts in one of the ways discussed on page 2. Consider using breakout rooms for small group discussions. For the discussion after the breakouts, use one or more of the methods described at the top of page 4.

Implementing the Plan - 15 minutes including a 5-minute activity

Implementation of the plan must incorporate all three steps, collaboration, execution, and monitoring for it to have the effect hoped for by the unit.

There needs to be collaboration between the unit Key 3 as well as other significant unit leaders or volunteers. Each must understand the action steps and the responsibilities assigned to individuals. The commissioner is instrumental in facilitating the collaboration.

The execution of the action step with documentation is essential. The commissioner supports brainstorming to find a way to document actions taken and results based on the unit's preferences. Because you are not present at every meeting, you can ask to be at unit or committee meetings to help determine the best ways to support and understand the steps the unit is taking to work toward the goals.

Monitoring the documentation is important. Even with the best planning, unexpected things happen that impact the unit's ability to work through action steps. Be patient, be supportive and celebrate successes. Be positive at each roadblock and make another action step to go forward.

Linking Resources - What Resources are available to Units?

The unit may need resources beyond the troop volunteers or parents. Commissioners aren't experts in all aspects of unit operations, and neither are the members of the unit, so units need to look for support in other places.

What resources are available?

A big question and it depends on the makeup of the district committee as well as the networking skills of the commissioner.

Let us look at the options.

Strong district committees often possess experts in all elements of the scouting program. Connect the unit to those experts. Sometimes the commissioner will need to facilitate the collaboration and then following-up to ensure the connection was made and helpful. (*Ask how that could be done.*)

You may also know another commissioner who can recommend a course of action or have an insight. Listen carefully during discussions at district commissioner meetings to get to know your fellow commissioners. Ask for suggestions. Also consult with your district commissioner.

As you visit units, you begin to see what they do well. Do the unit's youth conduct a productive patrol leaders council? is there a den leader who is exemplary in maintaining Scouts' attention or are their committee meetings organized effectively to deal with agenda items and unexpected concerns? Keep notes – other Scouting units are another source of support.

At the council level there is also support. Consider the committee chairs of the council committees. Your district vice chairs, or district chair or district executive can help with the names and emails of those volunteers. They have a depth of information on their specialty as well as a possibility of other connections, either in person or online that you could access.

(Are there any others that you have used successfully? This could be done with some open-ended questions to elicit the expertise of the participants and allow some networking)

Commissioner Actions Activity – 5-minute activity (if time allows) slide 12

Instructor-led Discussion – Unit Service Plan used in previous activity

From the breakout groups, each unit has decided on two goals and the person responsible has been identified. Now resources that can provide important strategies or successful practices that will support the unit need to be identified.

This time each member of the group is a commissioner. Discuss who might help from each level of resource, the district committee or commissioner corps, the council, or other units. Also determine the monitoring process and how-to check-in for progress updates.

Take about 2 minutes to write down your ideas on who outside the unit could support the actions steps that you started in the first breakout group and decide on a reporter to share your thoughts or ask individuals to suggest resources for some of the steps identified earlier.

When groups return, have a quick share of methods and 1st step of an action item. (Take 3 minutes)

For virtual presentation, consider putting participants into the same breakout rooms previously assigned.

For the discussion after the breakouts, use one or more of the methods described at the top of page 4.

Mentoring

Working the plan is critical. The planning together is over, and the identified individuals now need to work toward the established goals.

In the Unit Service Plan process, the commissioner serves as a mentor and provides resources to the unit.

As work on the action steps begins, the commissioner needs to ensure that resources are provided on a timely basis and follow up if they are not.

Commissioners can also follow up with the unit leadership, and ensure they are aware of the resources and are taking advantage of the support. The commissioner may need to provide others if those suggested are not working.

Each commissioner must continue to work collaboratively with the unit, always in a supportive role. If any of the identified persons who are responsible for each service plan item is unsure about what to do, the commissioner needs to address the leader's concerns.

The commissioner can help evaluate when unit service plan adjustments are needed. Sometimes other problems develop during the plan (such as the loss of unit leadership), so that adjustments are needed, or it could be that the plan has been effectively implemented. At that time, you may need to write another service plan.

Summary/Conclusion – 1 minutes

During this class we:

- Discussed the purpose of the Unit Service Plan
- Now understand the process of plan development
- Can implement the Unit Service Plan

Questions? – 3 minutes