

BCS 103

Linking District Resources



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

Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCS 103 - Case Study
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCS 103 - Linking District Resources course plan • BCS 103 - Linking District Resources PowerPoint presentation • Computer and projector • Optional: Whiteboard or flipchart, appropriate markers and eraser
Resources for additional participant learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Operations Handbook: https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/mission/pdf/34739.pdf

Course Connections

Connections to other CCS courses	MCS 303 - Managing Unit Service at the District Level (using Commissioner Tools)
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Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 3 minutes

Although commissioners are viewed as very knowledgeable and capable individuals, a key part of a commissioner's job is to link the unit to the district committee. Members of the district committee typically are individuals who can readily access further resources and wisdom to assist the unit.

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

- **Explain** typical district structure and the functions of the district.
- **Know** how to use the resources of the district to better support the units they serve.
- **Utilize** the Unit Service Plan when assessing the unit needs by identifying district resources.

District Structure and functions – 10 minutes

District's Purpose

A scouting district is a geographical area of the local council. The number and size of districts will vary greatly between councils.

The purpose of a district is to support the units in their area, enabling them to be successful in delivering a quality program to the youth we serve. This is accomplished by working through chartered organizations and community groups to organize and support successful units.

Typical District Organization

This organizational chart represents a typical district. Your district may combine or further subdivide the typical duties found on this slide. The commissioner portion of the district is on the left and your local professional scouter, or district executive is on the upper right. The remaining blocks are an example of a typical district committee. Your district may apply the term district vice-chairs to the various committee chair positions, but the typical blocks remain the same as they support the district's committee's four main functions:

- Membership
- Fund Development
- Program (which includes Training, Camp Promotion, Activities, and Advancement)
- Unit Service

In addition, there is a nominating committee to ensure a good division of labor and steady influx of volunteers. Let's spend some time diving deeper into the committee.

District Chair (selected duties)

It all starts with the district chairman. This person has several duties including:

- Identifying and continually recruiting enough of the right people as operating committee chairs
- Initiating plans and helping committee chairs recruit an adequate number of members
- Training, coaching, and mentoring district committee members
- Providing recognition
- Supporting local and national Scouting policies, procedures, and practices, and
- Annually appoint a new district nominating committee.

District's Four Functions

A key element of districts is the coordination of resources to support the unit...mobilize resources to ensure the growth and success of scouting units within the district territory.

All districts are responsible for carrying out four standard functions. As you can see, the district committee oversees the functions of Membership, Fund Development, and Program, while commissioners provide Unit Service. Volunteers are the key for each of these functions.

Each operating chair and the team of volunteers working to complete the various district functions are often the volunteer experts in membership development, training, advancement, finance and budgets, activity planning, event operations. Call on these volunteers to help with unit problem solving and to provide more in-depth information for successful unit management.

To better support the volunteers, there are many BSA publications that provide guidance and policy. Shown are two for the district and one for local unit commissioner, you'll see others on various slides that provide a good resource for the associated committee.

So, let's go through each of these four functions one by one.

District Resources – 10 minutes

Membership Committee

Let's start on deeper dive on district operating committees by starting with a look at the membership committee. An important function of the district is membership growth and the five items listed on the slide all support that. To do these items, the committee will gather information on the district area, cultivate relationships with the community, organize events, plan and carry-out district round-ups and other youth recruiting projects, and encourage units on pack to troop and troop to crew transitions.

Fund Development Committee

Another function of the district committee is finance and that is covered by the Fund development committee. Their objective is to see that the district provides its share of funds to the total council operating budget and encourage support of the local council endowment. Funds are raised from a variety of sources including Friends of Scouting, product sales like popcorn, special events and district activity budgets.

Special events are fund raising events like golf tournaments, sporting clays and silent auctions. District activities include program opportunities for youth and volunteers like camporees, pinewood derbies and district recognition banquets.

Program: Camping and Outdoor Program Committee

The final function of the district committee is program. This function oftentimes provides the largest membership portion of a district committee, this is normally a direct result of the major sub-functional areas it comprises. Your district may have a different approach in dividing up those sub-functions, but let's continue as if your District uses the standard organization chart.

Our first committee within program is the camping and outdoor program committee. Camp can include resident camps, day camps, family camps, Venturing and Sea Scout activities. To run those events, leaders are needed, and this committee should be the one to select them to develop those programs. The committee should work with the commissioners to help units carry out a year-round schedule of camping and outdoor program event. In addition, they should give special guidance on health and safety concerns of outdoor program activities. Their promotion of camperships can make camping more available to those who otherwise could not afford it.

Program: Activities and Civic Service Committee

The activities and civic service committee has the responsibilities that will fill many a month in the district calendar with activities. It could be a "Skill-O-Ree" or it could be finding a unit to support a Veterans' Day ceremony, but besides organizing these events, they will also ensure they are well publicized. A one-day competition would likely be sponsored by this committee. A camporee could be here or with the Camping and Outdoor Program Committee depending on the approach of your local district.

Program: Training Committee

With the advent of online training, the training committee may not be as visible as it was in the past, but it still plays an important role in providing the trained leaders which help ensure a great unit program. Among their duties:

- Recruit, train, and supervise trainers
- Train leaders
- Develop process to get new leaders trained within 90 days. If your district does not have a process in place for this, challenge your local committee to do so.
- Plan, promote and conduct district training events, these could include outdoor leader training as well courses that can be done online
- Maintain district training records
- Support and encourage pack trainers

Does a unit have a problem understanding how to add training into a scouters' records? If they do, this is a great place to send them.

Program: Advancement and Recognition Committee

Our final committee that we will discuss under program is the advancement and recognition committee. That sounds pretty straightforward as the committee should:

- Review advancement records and work with units that are experiencing difficulty. *
- Review & approve Eagle projects
- Ensure an up-to-date merit badge counselor list is available and all counselors are registered
- Identify and recognize leaders who should be thanked
- Oversee District Award of Merit selections
- Develop and present other district awards

***Unit advancement reports are readily available in Commissioner Tools: Contacts**

Unit Service and the Unit Service Plan – 10 minutes

The fourth function of the district committee is unit service. That's Us – the commissioner corps!

Commissioner Objectives

As commissioners, we have many tasks and responsibilities, but if you take a higher look, they all fall within five key focus areas:

- Supporting unit growth and retention
- Contacting Units
- Linking unit needs to resources
- Supporting timely charter renewals
- Delivering effective roundtables

Objective number three is linking unit needs to resources. Resources can include publications, webpages, etc., but today we will focus on the district as a key resource for supporting our units.

The Unit Service Plan

The Unit Service Plan is a tool to strengthen a unit and enable it to offer the best possible program to the youth it serves. A collaborative effort between the unit's leaders, its chartered organization, the unit commissioner, and the district operating committee, it establishes a customized annual plan that is periodically reviewed and updated to provide continuing improvement.

In addition, the Unit Service Plan enables commissioners to focus on their primary responsibilities we just covered. After a unit is assessed and a plan for improvement is developed, the district is committed to help with the unit's success. As a commissioner, you need to enable the exchange between the unit and the right group or person on the district committee.

District Commitment

How does the district commitment part work? It starts with knowing the right resources within the district, then linking the unit to those resources, and finally, providing monitoring and follow-up to see plan progress. Your knowledge of your local district organization and having the associated contact information will be key to enabling the process.

Case Study – 10 minutes (5 Minute small group discussion - 5 Minute recap)

Handout

Let's see if we can put some of this new-found or once again reviewed knowledge and put it to work. We will do this by reviewing case studies for hypothetical units that have had various problems discovered during a unit assessment that can be supported by some part of the district committee. Your job is to determine what part of the district committee a unit should be referred to for each of their problems.

Note: Depending on the size of your class and the time you have available, you can divide the class into multiple groups and assign each one or more cases. Allow time for groups to find solutions and then bring them back together to present their solutions.

The case studies will likely generate additional insights and questions within the group.

Group 1: Case A – Cub Scout Pack

Group 2: Case B - Troop

For virtual presentation, consider either:

- Having a discussion of the whole class. People can raise their hands or otherwise indicate an interest to speak. The instructor can call them. Alternatively, you can use the chat feature.
- Another option is use breakout rooms affording timed group chats and returning to the larger group for the sharing of ideas.

Summary/Conclusion – 4 minutes

The district is an important part of delivering Scouting to our youth. Let's review a few items:

Q: What are the four functions of the district?

Q: What are some of the key operating committees of the district?

Q: How is the Unit Service Plan used to link unit needs to district resources?

Questions? – 3 minutes