

BCS 112

Recruiting Unit Commissioners



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

Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCS 112 - Making the Ask for Servant Leadership, 1 per participant • BCS 112 - Roster Reviews: Searching for Commissioner Candidates, 1 per participant
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCS 112 – Recruiting Unit Commissioners course plan • BCS 112 – Recruiting Unit Commissioners PowerPoint presentation • Instructors materials - 5P's Slide 7 printed on sturdy paper with a way to display during the class • Instructors materials - 5P's Slides 8-12 printed on sturdy paper (or full-page labels) with a way to display on foam core board during the class • BCS 112 - Making the Ask for Servant Leadership Sample.pdf • Computer and projector
Resources for additional participant learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendstorming Manual 510-003 • https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/commissioner-recruiting/

Course Connections

Connections to other CCS courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCS 312 - Recruiting a Commissioner Team • DCS 512 - Commissioner Recruiting Workshop
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Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 5 minutes

Presenter Introduction

Recruiting is an ongoing need. Every commissioner has a part in the process. This course describes a process for the identification and recruitment of commissioners.

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

- **Identify** and recruit candidates for unit service.
- **Know** the 5 P's of recruiting.
- **Understand** the method for recruiting commissioners

Recruiting Candidates for Unit Service – 3 minutes

Role of administrative commissioners

This course will focus on recruiting, a responsibility of all administrative commissioners, with the support of unit commissioners, to identify and recruit enough of the right people so that all units in the district receive regular helpful service. The district commissioner takes the lead in identifying the commissioner needs of the district.

Finding the Right Person

Have you ever asked if there were some sort of template, or job description, that tells us just what skills and experience are needed for each commissioner we recruit?

While there certainly is a “job” description for a commissioner, there is no perfectly defined set of individual skills. Today we need all sorts of commissioners with different interests, skills, and experiences. A “cookie-cutter” approach to recruiting isn’t effective.

So, when, where, how and what do you need to do to find the right person?

Servant’s Heart

As commissioners begin to prepare for recruiting, they begin to list the attributes they need in a person to fill a commissioner position. There is, however, one item that should be first on every list: *a great commissioner has a servant’s heart!* Why? All commissioners are leaders; *great commissioners are servant leaders*. It has been said that success isn’t just about what we can accomplish in our lives. It’s about what we inspire others to do.

Scouting experience isn’t required to be a commissioner. Scouting U is great at training volunteers. As Scouting U continues to add new training modules, we’ll only get better. We provide training to any volunteer, so they are prepared for unit service, but effective unit service needs heart. We can’t teach that, so it must be a part an essential trait of every candidate you hope to recruit.

The Five Ps of Recruitment – 15 minutes

There is not a district in the BSA that does not need additional commissioners. Recruiting is a year-round process. We should continually be looking for candidates. Once one is identified, we need to know what is next. Successful recruiting is far more than just asking someone to serve.

So, let's look at what we call "The 5Ps of Recruitment".

Instructor notes: Print out each "P" (from Slide 6 on card stock or full-page label. As a part of the discussion add each "P" onto a flip chart or foam core board.

PREPARATION

PASSION

POTENTIAL

PRIORITIES

POACHING

Now let's discuss these steps in detail – one by one

Instructor notes: As a part of the discussion build slide of images presented in slides 8-12 on a flip chart or foam core board. Print out each slide graphic (found in folder materials) on card stock or full-page label.

Classroom option: Slides 8-12 could be handed out to individuals in class and discussed.

For virtual presentation, use slide 7 and hide slide 8-12.

Question the group: *What do you need to think about before beginning to recruit an individual or individuals?*

Preparation

Successful recruitment begins with a vision: How will you— and the person you've identified— know if he or she has been successful? Increasingly, we have metrics available to identify where unit service work is needed. Those metrics can also help measure progress—and success. Before making an ask, write down, specifically, what success will look like. Make a reasonable estimate of how much time it will take to fulfill the responsibilities in question. The best candidates will ask you about both. Be prepared to answer. Remember that each type of commissioner has a unique job description, time required, and personal competencies needed.

Passion

We have all heard that if we find work we love, we'll never work another day in our life. That's passion! Our dedicated volunteers are passionate about Scouting, but when you get down to the details, they're not all passionate about the same things in scouting. Some **really** want to be on the front lines and work directly with the youth, but that may mean helping them work on merit badges, or it may mean taking them backpacking, or perhaps teaching them to swim.

Dedicated Scouters understand the importance of unit service, sometimes to individual units and others to units within a program, such as roundtable commissioners. Not all possible candidates will have a passion for this type of scouting service. A bit of homework will help identify a candidate's passion. If it doesn't match with your vision of commissioner service, the chances of successful recruitment drop significantly. Think about keeping this candidate's name to pass onto others who need scouting volunteers.

Potential

Passion is one thing. Potential is something entirely different. While perhaps hard to understand, some people have a passion for something they're not particularly good at. This requires homework on your part.

Ask the group-*What quality would you want to have for a commissioner?* --What is your candidate **really** good at? --Does it match up with your vision of success? If so, your chances of success rise dramatically.

Priorities

Strange as it sounds, we don't always control our candidate's priorities. A candidate with both passion and potential for the work you need done may have 6-month-old twins at home or may have recently accepted a promotion that will require heavy travel with a burdensome workload for the next 12 months. Generally, volunteers should be given the chance to decide whether they have the time to do what you need done, but your wisdom is needed, too. Sometimes it is evident that we're asking more than anyone can reasonably be expected to give. That, too, requires a bit of homework as you prepare for recruiting.

Poaching

Do not do it! Even if you've found the **perfect** candidate—his or her passion, potential, and priorities all align with your vision—don't make the ask until you do one more bit of homework. Find out if this person is already doing a great job in Scouting for someone else? If so, your first call needs to be to his or her current leader. Sometimes you will learn the current assignment is close to a conclusion or that there is a way for your candidate to perform both assignments. Other times you will find that recruiting that candidate for your position will damage our efforts to build Scouting in another area. It's tough to pass on the perfect candidate, but Scouting will be better for it.

Commissioner Fit

As commissioners look for possible candidates - "Commissioner Fit" is an important consideration. The probability of a unit commissioner helping a unit to grow and thrive increases when there is a good fit. But how do we determine what makes for a good fit?

Consider the 5 key components of Commissioner Fit:

1. **Strengths:** what does the unit do well? This relates to the Potential discussed previously. If a unit does a great job at developing an annual budget and program plan, a commissioner with little or no experience in that area may still be a great choice if he or she is a good fit in other areas.
2. **Needs:** where does the unit most need support? The unit needs should match the Passion of the commissioner candidate.

3. *Skills*: does the culture of the unit call for a unit commissioner with particularly strong communication skills, or patience, or the ability to teach, or coach, or plan, or hold people accountable in a positive manner?

4. *Experience*: experience in the unit's program (Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Exploring, etc.) is an asset, but may not be essential. Substantial tenure in Scouting may also be an asset but may also not be essential. Also consider that strong units with skilled leadership may be excellent candidates for new unit commissioners as they can provide a great opportunity to learn and develop unit service skills.

5. *Interaction*: a unit commissioner's interactions with a unit change over time. After getting to know one another, unit commissioners may have a positive relationship with unit leaders that continues uninterrupted and enables them to work together effectively to help the unit grow and thrive.

If all 5 key components of commissioner fit are carefully considered, it's likely a unit will be found that a commissioner can serve effectively. Administrative commissioners should review unit commissioner assignments annually and assess the need for adjustments.

Ask the group –

What if the fit just isn't right?

What could cause the "fit" to change?

- Change in unit leadership
- Commissioner reassignment

If "fit" changes, unit assignments may need to change also.

For virtual presentation, consider the following:

To lead a discussion in a virtual class, you have a few options:

- Allow people to raise their virtual or real hands to be called on;
- Allow people to speak up, knowing you might need to call on one of them if two people speak up at the same time;
- Use the chat line for people to input their answers. You can call on them based on the chat line responses. You might also be able to create a game with the chat line by challenging people to answer quickly.

A facilitator can help you identify who to call on in any of these approaches.

Seeking great "commissioner fit" will help ensure we help achieve that mission and fulfill the vision!

Identifying Skills Needed for Unit Service and Recruitment - 15 minutes

Handouts – After presentation distribute:

- Making the Ask for Servant Leadership, 1 per participant
- Roster Reviews: Searching for Commissioner Candidates, 1 per participant

For virtual presentation, consider the following:

To distribute handouts, you can (a) email them in advance, (b) have your 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.

When, where, how and why recruit

When?

So, we've defined the basics of WHO we need to recruit. Now, when's the best time to recruit? *(This could be made more interactive by suggesting a season and asking participants, why or why not?)*

- Perhaps during autumn - school is back in session and vacations are over. Scout recruiting is in full swing. Cuborees, Webelorees, camporees are being held. Unit members are out enjoying the outing of Scouting.
- Winter may be better. Training events are occurring, and schedules are full of school, unit and sports events as well as holiday planning.
- Maybe spring would be best. This is a time of bridging, completing rank requirements, or orienting to a new unit.
- No wait – summer. No probably not – everyone is on vacation or at day camp or summer camp.

In fact, none of those is best; recruiting is a continuous, year-round activity!

Where?

So where can you find potential commissioners?

Commissioners, unit or roundtable, build relationships with units and unit leaders getting to know many of the individuals. They may meet great scouters who are looking for another challenge in scouting but....

- Don't forget the 5 Ps (*Preparation, Passion, Potential. Priorities, Poaching*) – **particularly Poach.**
- Consider making connections with local organizations such as the National Eagle Scout Association, or the Order of the Arrow or local scout alumni meetings. Take time to build relationships with members, interacting with them at gatherings.
- Consider professions that mentor or coach. Those that know how to build relationships and influence the behavior of others. *(Ask the group for suggestions of professions that would qualify-have your own list prepared)*
- Your social circles-who do you know that is a servant leader?

For virtual presentation, the chat line is a great tool for quick questions. Another alternative is to conduct a poll of options you prepare in advance. The facilitator can run the poll for you.

Identify those who might be interested in becoming a commissioner and pass those names to the administrative commissioners to follow up on building a recruiting plan.

How? *(show the template for the planning the ask)*

Once you've found the who, and have decided to ask, decide how to ask.

- Work as a team with someone who knows and has a connection with the candidate and someone known to be good at asking individuals to volunteer.
- Prepare - Have a job description in hand, including the time commitment. Be ready to explain why you feel they would be a good commissioner. Be specific, be honest. Also share some of the benefits of volunteering (influence, fellowship, achievement).
- Make an appointment. Set a special time and place to meet.
- Make the ask. Be prepared for questions or excuses.

Then follow up!

Response Follow up

There are 3 different answers-each requires a different follow up.

Your follow up needs to be respectful of the candidate and their reason.

(If time allows, ask the group how you would respond to No, Maybe, or Yes)

For virtual presentation, the chat line is a great tool for quick questions. Another alternative is to conduct a poll of options you prepare in advance. The facilitator can run the poll for you.

The key is to follow up. Regardless of the answer, follow up. It will pay dividends in the long run-hopefully resulting in a new commissioner.

Recruiting Tools

There are some tools you can use to find possible candidates that may be invisible to you personally.

Roster Mining

Roster mining is a process designed to identify candidates. This method involves using unit rosters to find those who have dedicated many years to scouting and then determining if it is time to ask for another scouting position. It is a team job to search the rosters.

Once the candidates have been identified, further work is needed to assess their potential before proceeding to make an ask, including inquiries with other active volunteers who can provide further information about the candidates "fit" with unit service. You will want to identify that person the candidate will find it hard to say "no" to if your research confirms they are a great candidate.

Commissioner Tools

Recruiting isn't the responsibility of every commissioner. It is typically a responsibility of administrative commissioners, but unit commissioners and roundtable commissioners can be one of best resources for identifying great candidates for unit service. They interact with units and are engaged with their volunteers. If they understand what makes a great commissioner, they can be on the lookout for possible candidates.

Remember that *Commissioner Tools* can be a recruiting tool, too. Step 6 of the Detailed Assessment function provides a field into which information on potential commissioner candidates can be entered and for administrative commissioners to review those opportunities. Effective use of this tool requires training commissioners to use it, but it can be a great way to identify candidates. Watch the videos on how to use *Commissioner Tools* to see how this is done.

Summary with Review of Learning Objectives - 3 minutes

- Identifying and recruiting unit commissioners is a role of the district commissioner and the other administrative commissioners but need the eyes of all commissioners to help identify possible candidates.
- Remember the 5 Ps - Preparation, passion, potential, priorities and poaching – is a successful recruitment process. Be systematic in your approach
- Understanding the steps that have proven effective in recruiting commissioners and other scouts.

Any Questions? - 5 minutes

Closing/Commissioner Minute (optional) - 2 minutes

A thought to take with you.

"I can think of no other edifice constructed by man as altruistic as a lighthouse. They were built only to serve. They weren't built for any other purpose..." George Bernard Shaw

Can you think of any other Scouter as altruistic as a commissioner?

They were created only to serve. They were not recruited for any other purpose...

Now go and find others like yourself. Thank you for all you do!